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The witness of St. Paul to
Christ

THE BOYLE LECTURES

For 1869

RIVINGTONS

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THE WITNESS OF ST. PAUL TO CHRIST

Being the Boyle Lectures for 1869

WITH AN APPENDIX

ON THE CREDIBILITY OF THE ACTS

IN REPLY TO THE RECENT STRICTURES OF DR. DAVIDSON

BY THE

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RIVINGTONS
London, Oxford, and Cambridge
1869.

EXTRACT

FROM

A CODICIL TO THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF THE

HONOURABLE ROBERT BOYLE, Esq.,

Dated July 28, 1691.

"WHEREAS I have an intention to settle in my lifetime the sum of Fifty Pounds per annum for ever, or at least for a considerable number of years, to be for an annual salary for some learned Divine or Preaching Minister, from time to time to be elected and resident within the City of London or circuit of the Bills of Mortality, who shall be enjoined to perform the offices following, viz.—To preach Eight Sermons in the year, for Proving the Christian Religion against notorious Infidels, viz. Atheists, Theists, Pagans, Jews, and Mahometans, not descending lower to any controversies that are among Christians themselves; these Lectures to be on the first Monday of the respective months of January, February, March, April, May, September, October, November, in such church as my trustees herein named shall from time to time appoint; to be assisting to all Companies, and encouraging of them

in any undertaking for Propagating the Christian Religion in foreign parts; to be ready to satisfy such real scruples as any may have concerning these matters, and to answer such new objections and difficulties as may be started, to which good answers have not yet been made. . . . . I will that after my death Sir John Rotherham, Sergeant-at-Law, Sir Henry Ashurst, of London, Knight and Baronet, Thomas Tennison, Doctor in Divinity, and John Evelyn, sen., Esq., and the survivors or survivor of them, and such person or persons as the survivor of them shall appoint to succeed in the following trust, shall have the election and nomination of such Lecturer, and also shall and may constitute and appoint him for any term not exceeding three years, and at the end of such term shall make a new election and appointment of the same or any other learned Minister of the Gospel, residing within the City of London or extent of the Bills of Mortality, at their discretions."

[Note.—By an arrangement of the Bishop of London, the Boyle Lectures are now delivered annually at the Chapel Royal, Whitehall, in the afternoons of Sundays after Easter, at the discretion of the Preacher. The delivery of the following Lectures commenced the Fourth Sunday after Easter, and terminated the Third Sunday after Trinity.]

PREFACE

IN Lectures of the nature of those contained in the present Volume, the writer is met by two difficulties. In the first place he has to preach to Christians, but to deliver such an argument as may be unassailable by those who are not Christians; he must assume a certain amount of faith in his hearers, but none at all in his readers. Secondly, he is forbidden by the conditions of his office to meddle with "controversies that are among Christians themselves;" though in endeavouring to "prove the Christian religion" he cannot but assume that it has certain limits, which being transgressed, it ceases to be Christian; that it possesses certain features, which being obliterated, it can no longer be recognised; for otherwise, how could "the Christian religion" be, in the smallest degree, distinguishable from

"Atheism, Theism," or any other of the specified forms of unbelief with which he has to contend? And yet in the present day no one can be ignorant that this is the very "controversy" that is much, if not mainly, debated "among Christians themselves."

In other words, we are fallen on times in which the danger to Christianity does not lie so much from without as from within; it arises rather from its professed friends than from its open enemies. In saying this we are simply giving utterance to a conviction that is forced upon us, and not speaking under the influence of any party-prejudice, or even of special attachment to any one form of Christian belief. There are comparatively few who would venture to assume an attitude of professed hostility to Christ. The tendency is rather to assume that His meaning and intention must have been other than it is represented and believed to have been by any of the recognised Creeds, Churches, or Sects of Christendom. In this assumption we are asked not only to surrender the genuineness of the most cherished writings of the New Testament; such,

for example, as the Gospel of St. John, the Acts of the Apostles, or the Epistle to the Ephesians, but even the traditional and familiar portrait of Christ preserved to us in the so-called synoptical Gospels; not only the last fragments and vestiges of any theory of Inspiration whatever, but even the position of Scripture, in whole or in part, as a standard of doctrine, as of final authority in matters of faith[1]; not only particular ideas and

[1] It is this which is implicitly denied by Dr. Davidson, Introd. to the Study of New Testament, vol. i., Preface, p. ix. "When these records are held to be absolutely correct in all "matters, whether historical or speculative, scientific or "*doctrinal*, they acquire a supernatural and fictitious pre-"eminence similar to that which is conferred on the pope by "the theory of papal infallibility; they are called God's word "throughout, which they never claim to be, and thus free "inquiry into their credibility is at once checked or suppressed. "God's word is in the Scriptures; all Scripture is not the "word of God. The writers were inspired in various degrees, "and are therefore not all equally trustworthy *guides to belief* "*and conduct*." The italics are ours. Let us take, then, the Epistles to Rome and Galatia. Are *these* "absolutely correct" in *doctrinal* matters, or are they not? Are they "trustworthy guides to belief and conduct," or are they not? These are the questions we want answered. If these Epistles, for example, are not trustworthy, it is absurd to pretend to pay higher deference to other portions of Scripture, for these come with a *human* authority second to none; and if these are untrustworthy, none are trustworthy; and if these are not to be trusted, there is nothing that we can trust but ourselves,

notions derived from or suggested by the formulated expressions of systematic theology, such as many of those connected with the doctrines of Sacrifice, Atonement, the Trinity, and the like, but even the very fact of our Lord's Resurrection itself[2]. And all this in the name of freedom, pro-

our own wisdom, our own judgment. There is, therefore, confessedly no standard for faith. It is useless to appeal to Scripture for decision in matters of faith; for the faith is determined before we appeal to Scripture. Thus not only the genuineness of certain books or passages is called in question, but the authority of Scripture as a *whole* is overthrown; there is at once an end to all religious controversy, "a consummation devoutly to be wished," if it were not at the expense of all certainty about any religious truth, save that only which seems certain to ourselves. Again, the illustration drawn from papal infallibility is not altogether happy, for it is perfectly certain that many zealous Catholics would demur to the notion of the Pope's (personal) infallibility, though every zealous Catholic would be devoted in his allegiance to the Pope. So many a sincere and earnest Christian might demur to the absolute infallibility of the Bible, but every such Christian must and ought to be devout and honest in his allegiance to the Bible, as a "trustworthy guide to belief and conduct." The question is manifestly one of degree; but it is surely wrong, under colour of attacking a superstitious reverence for the Bible, to overthrow by implication every vestige of the authority of the Bible. And it is against *this* that we protest, whether it is done in the name of "criticism" or of any thing else.

[2] "Others more speculative, but not less honest, will resolve "the fact into a spiritual resurrection having the souls of the "disciples for its theatre; finding an explanation of that state

gress, love of truth, the claims of science, zeal for the best interests of Christianity, and consistent

" of mind in the natural reaction necessarily following the first " impression of the death of Jesus, psychologically possible. " They will attribute visions of the risen Jesus, narrated in the " gospels, to popular imagination, conceiving that the memoirs " could not but depict him in a form more or less corporeal. " Feeling the force of objections to the reanimation of a body, " of the contradictory statements of the evangelists, the " different points of view taken in Paul's epistles, and the " existence of a predisposition to visions in the first Christian " believers, they will hesitate to accept the literal. But not " the less will they maintain that Christianity does not fall " with the denial of the resurrection; especially as the fact is " reported in a manner so contradictory, and susceptible of " different interpretations. A thing surrounded with historical " and other difficulties will not be made a corner-stone in the " edifice. And they are right, if the superior dignity of Jesus " rests upon his stainless conscience, his life of love and purity, " his words of truth, his embodiment of the Father to mankind; " if the glorious manifestation of divine love in a human " person be the essence of his biography; if he be 'the express " image' of the Almighty." Davidson, Introd. to New Testament, ii. 40, 41. The question arises, Are we to accept this for Christianity, or are we not? If we are, What guarantee have we that our Christianity will not shortly surrender *Christ*, as it has already surrendered the fact of His resurrection? We join issue on this broad principle, Whether or not the historic resurrection—the "reanimation" of the "body" of Jesus is "a corner-stone in the edifice"?—Whether or not "they are right" who deny it, or explain it away, or regard it as a non-essential, "feeling the force of objections to" it? From such quasi-Christianity as this we thankfully turn to Mr. Westcott's profoundly philosophical "Gospel of the Resurrection."

devotion to the teaching and example of even Christ Himself.

Now the question arises, Whether the Lecturer on Boyle's foundation is stepping out of his province in venturing to combat these positions? The writer of the present Lectures not only believes he is not, but entirely fails to see how the argument for Christianity can be maintained, if they are to be left unassailed and treated as purely open questions. What is there to defend if every thing is to be surrendered? Oh, it is said, the spirit of Christianity and the morality of the Gospel. But the morality of the Gospel, nay, even the moral character of Christ Himself, has not escaped unattacked. Are we to give up *this*, or are we to defend it? Assuredly, we cannot defend it consistently if we are to surrender the fact of Christ's Resurrection; *unless* we give up also the most prominent assertions of even the synoptical Gospels, that is, unless we give up the very documents that contain the morality of the Gospel, which is a simple paradox; for morality so defended becomes no longer that of the Gospel, but a morality of our own, the principles of which

may be stated as we please, and not as the Gospels state them.

Or again, Where are we to find the spirit of Christianity if the standard of every age since the first is to be rejected, if the Epistles of St. Paul are to be repudiated as correct expressions of this spirit, if the first age itself is held to be falsely represented even in the Gospels and the Acts, if the very writings, from which alone we can ascertain what it was are to be regarded as suspicious, unauthentic, unreliable, or inaccurate. It is patent that such a spirit can only be called by courtesy the spirit of Christianity, for it becomes, professedly, an invention, a discovery of our own, which is but partially expressed in the documents, partially developed by the exercise of our own ingenuity. For this Christianity does not even claim to be primitive; it is the product of the spirit of the age and a certain unauthorised ideal of the character of Christ, which varies as the spirit of the age varies. And this from the nature of the case cannot be defended, because it is professedly the subject of a progressive variation, for which sufficient and unlimited allowance must be made.

We are reduced, therefore, to this dilemma; that the very nature of principles such as these precludes the possibility of any stand being made for faith any where; there is nothing in Christianity thus understood, which can be defended, for there is nothing which must not, upon principle, be regarded as purely open. And then, in this case, the fulfilment of an office provided ostensibly for the defence of *some* Christianity becomes an actual impossibility, and a contradiction in terms. The intentions of Boyle cannot be carried out, for the progress of criticism, so-called, can recognise no limits, the supremacy of reason knows of no restraint, and so the barriers are broken down between the religion which his Lectureship was founded to maintain, and those it was appointed to refute.

The writer felt, then, that he was not stepping out of his province if, in the course of argument, he attacked positions which are indeed now maintained among Christians themselves, but which seemed to him to be fatal to Christianity. That, for instance, must surely be a very spurious kind of Christianity which can be content to surrender

the reality of our Lord's Resurrection as an historic fact. And yet, as we have seen, there are those who would do so *in the name of Christ.* What, then, is the course to be adopted by him who speaks in memory of Boyle on behalf of Christ? Is he to surrender the Resurrection or is he not? If he takes his stand on this fact as on a rock, he at once finds himself involved in "controversies that are among Christians;" and yet how can he do otherwise in speaking for Christ, for "if Christ be not raised our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins." Not, however, that these words themselves are of any weight to decide the case, because on the hypothesis they are to be regarded merely as the expression of an individual opinion which is subject to the critical correction of our own. They were the utterance of a Pauline sentiment, not of a Divine truth. Now if a man chooses to maintain this, are we to consider ourselves absolved from the duty of contending with him merely because he is pleased to call himself a Christian? If so, verily, the Lectureship which was founded by Boyle becomes an obsolete superfluity. The frontier between "the Christian religion" and "Theism," or any

thing else, becomes of the vaguest and most indefinite character. It is impossible to say where the one begins, or where the other ends [3]. They are so blended as to be indistinguishable; and the only regions to be avoided are those beyond this frontier, where the Christianity becomes distinctively Christian, where it gathers round and centres in CHRIST, as the one fountain of life, and the highest object of worship.

And it cannot be doubted that, in the present

[3] Dr. Davidson himself feels the need of fixing a limit somewhere, though he does not decide where. He says in his Preface, p. ix, "Not that a religion can exist apart from *some* theo-"logy. Still the amount of theology needed to constitute a "religion may be indefinitely small. If men could see that the "Spirit of God neither dwelt exclusively in apostles, nor rendered "them infallible, however highly gifted they may have been, the "sacred records would be less distorted, and different values "would be assigned to the several parts of the volume according "to their nature." No one supposes the Apostles were infallible, the records prove the contrary. But for all that, the Gospel delivered by them may have been, and been intended to be, *authoritative;* and this also the records prove, if we will accept them. But it is plainly inconsistent to accept the evidence of the records to disprove the authority, and *not* accept that evidence to establish it. If the basis of theology is to be "*indefinitely* small," what is to prevent it from becoming *nil?* Surely the Apostles' Creed is a basis "small" enough, but What does it not include ?

day, there is a strong current of religious thought setting in this direction. While one large section of the Church is mistaking the æsthetic for the spiritual, and seeking to develope the internal by paying homage to the outward, the sensuous, and the visible, another is altogether confounding the provinces of the intellect and the spirit, subordinating the spirit to the intellect, and doing its best to extinguish and suppress the development of that faculty which is the distinctive glory of man, inasmuch as, in his spiritual nature, he is made after the image of God, and in that nature alone can be restored to God's image. But it is to this spiritual nature pre-eminently, if not exclusively, that the writings of the New Testament appeal. They were all, without exception, in the first instance, addressed to persons who claimed to have been endowed with a new spirit, to have had their spiritual nature developed by this endowment. They were addressed, therefore, to persons who, to a certain extent, were prepared for the message they conveyed. The soil in which the seed was sown had been under a process of spiritual cultivation. The Christian writings were writings addressed to the initiated.

"We speak wisdom among them that are perfect[4]." The Christians were men who called themselves "the enlightened," "the illuminated." It is plain, therefore, that we make no unwarrantable assumption if we demand, as an indispensable pre-requisite for appreciating these writings, a share in a corresponding illumination. "For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." But it is this unquestionable fact that the whole attitude of criticism disregards or even denies. It leaves out altogether the spiritual faculty, by which alone these writings can be duly appreciated or rightly apprehended. We make no harsh assertion in saying this, for it is manifestly and confessedly the method of criticism so to do. It regards the exercise of the spiritual faculty as an assumption, a pre-conception, at once improper and unscientific. That is to say, criticism assumes that Scripture which, on its own showing, appeals to an exceptional illumination, a prepared state of mind, can be best understood in neglect of and without it. Surely

[4] 1 Cor. ii. 6.

by far the most unreasonable assumption, a conclusion the most unscientific.

But it may be said, that if Scripture thus appeals to the initiated, it is useless for the uninitiated to attempt to deal with it. And yet not so, for this reason, though Scripture is addressed directly to those who are possessed of a spirit kindred to that in which it is written, yet it seeks also to foster and beget that spirit. It does not appeal to a faculty of which man is naturally destitute, but to one which needs developing, and which it promises to develope. It does not address itself mainly to the intellect, the understanding, the taste, or the judgment of man, but to his feelings and his reason, his conscience and his will. If, therefore, the feelings and the conscience are studiously held in restraint, and excluded in dealing with Scripture (which is conspicuously the attitude of criticism, for criticism appeals only to the understanding and the reason), it necessarily follows that the special object of Scripture is not attained, the very faculties of man, to which it is directly addressed, are not reached, and the special message of Scripture is not received.

It is obvious, that in studying any book whatever we must, as far as possible, assimilate ourselves to those whom it contemplates addressing. Now it is expressly alleged, to the discredit of the early Christians to whom the writings of the New Testament were addressed, that they were uncritical. If therefore in our study of these writings we assume merely the frigid posture of criticism, we shall manifestly place the subject of our study at a disadvantage. We shall certainly not understand it better, but worse than we otherwise should do. For we shall approach it without that very qualification which it assumed to exist, and which it endeavoured to develope; and obviously so far we shall be unjust to it, and shall do it violence. "These things were written that ye might believe, and that believing, ye might have life through His Name." They were not written that we might cavil, and that the result of our cavilling might be the not impossible or unreasonable conviction that life through His Name was a delusion and a mistake. And yet if the writer's object was "that ye might believe," the critic's object of regarding the matters proposed for belief as entirely open or possibly false

was manifestly and altogether excluded from it. The two objects can have nothing in common, the one must be out of harmony with the other. And certainly the total unconsciousness on the part of the writer of the probability of any result but that of belief following the perusal of what he records, is one of the strongest marks of sincerity on his part, and of veracity in the narrative. The existence of any sinister or interested motive is absolutely impossible. And therefore to assume that the purely Christian motive was itself a wrong one, is fatal not only to superstition but to Christianity.

Now it would seem that nothing can be more needful in the present day than clearly to understand what is, and what is not, compatible with Christianity. For example,—to believe that St. John wrote the fourth Gospel may be an open question, to be determined by evidence; but to *accept the teaching* of the fourth Gospel as truly and rightly Christian, is another matter altogether, and cannot be regarded as an open question, *so far as we ourselves are disciples of the writer*, that is to say, so far as his purpose, "that ye

might believe," is fulfilled in us. The one is strictly a question of criticism, the other is a question of *faith*, into which criticism has no business to obtrude itself, unless indeed we are willing to build our faith on nothing but criticism, and then faith, properly speaking, is no longer faith. The fourth Gospel *may* be *true*, whether it was written by St. John or by any one else. How then is the question of its truth affected by the question, Who wrote it? They who would make its truth to turn upon its authenticity, are really mixing up two independent questions, which have nothing in common. But how very frequent is it for "criticism" to throw out insinuations against the teaching of the fourth Gospel under cover of attacks upon its authenticity, which is *assumed* to be a doubtful point. Is this fair in the first place, and is it wise in the second?

Let us suppose, for example, a reader in the second century meeting with the fourth Gospel; he reads it, and is led thereby to adopt the writer's point of view as his own; perhaps he does not ask who wrote it, for he is not "cri-

tical," but the *teaching* of the Gospel has justified itself in him, for he has found those words of it to be *true*, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," and he forthwith becomes, or rather has become, a Christian; but What have his faith and the irresistible, unimpeachable evidence by which it is confirmed to him got to do with the Johannine authorship of the Gospel? He is a Christian, he is not a *Johannine* Christian; for the authority even of St. John is as nothing to him compared with That authority which the unknown writing has revealed to him. That writing has brought him into contact and union with One far greater, far higher, far truer, than St. John; and inestimably precious as the writing is, that writing has made him conscious of One greater even than itself, who is Lord of his being, and the Fountain of his life, from whom, and not from the writing, his spiritual existence is derived, and by whom it is sustained. Having, however, been led by the writing unto Him, he cannot turn round upon the

writing and disbelieve *it;* because, if he did so, he would disbelieve *Him*. Certain passages in the writing may be difficult, certain statements may be hard to believe, certain words, verses, or portions, may be spurious, but as a whole, the drift and tenour of the writing are manifest, and if he is sure of the Person to whom these point, he is, comparatively speaking, independent of, and indifferent to, all else. Least of all can he be persuaded that his belief is a delusion, because he is assured on "critical" grounds, of which he knows nothing, that the fourth Gospel was not written by St. John, for he never gave a thought to the question whether or not it was. Surely such a case as this is conceivable, and, if conceivable, not without its moral.

Let it not, however, for one moment be supposed that we are willing to surrender the fourth Gospel as the work of St. John. Criticism assumes far too much when it assumes, as a closed question, that he was not the author of it. We do no such thing. We merely take this Gospel as a notorious instance and a specimen case in point, to show the nature of the ground

we wish to occupy. The argument in the present Lectures has not led us into the discussion, or the defence, of the authenticity of St. John's Gospel, but we are quite sure that if, in *this* particular, our ground is solid and safe, it cannot fail us in any point of lesser importance.

Shall we then call the credibility of the Acts of the Apostles a point of lesser importance? It can hardly be so. Here again the *authorship* is a matter of secondary consequence; but the *credibility* of the book it is, perhaps, hardly possible to over-estimate. For this reason, therefore, the latest strictures of Dr. Davidson have been examined in the Appendix, because some assertions in the Lectures seemed to make this desirable; and the result, it will be seen, tends to show that the critical objections and difficulties raised by him and others are certainly not of a kind to warrant the very confident assertions that have been advanced. In this case again, however, we must remind the reader of the exact nature of the issue at stake. Let it be granted that the Acts of the Apostles were written as late as A.D. 125, that the work is a composite work,

that the miraculous elements in it are highly exaggerated, if not wholly false—then what follows? Certainly not that which Baur and Davidson would have us believe, namely, that a policy of conciliation between the disciples of Peter and Paul had been the moving object with the writer, because in this case imaginary circumstances are invented to account for an imaginary motive—we have no reason to believe that the divergence was so great as it suits this theory to imagine, the chief if not the only foundation for it is discovered in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, the significance of which is unduly magnified;—but that manifestly at that period there was living an author capable of conceiving and executing a work of such surpassing beauty, that M. Renan himself has most happily called it the "Evangelical Odyssey[5];"—that with regard

[5] The whole passage from Renan is well worth quoting:—"La gaieté, la jeunesse de cœur que respirent ces odyssées évangéliques furent quelque chose de nouveau, d'original et de charmant. Les *Actes des Apôtres*, expression de ce premier élan de la conscience chrétienne, sont un livre de joie, d'ardeur sereine. Depuis les poëmes homériques on n'avait pas vu d'œuvre pleine de sensations aussi fraîches. Une brise matinale, une odeur de mer, si j'ose le dire, inspirant quelque chose d'allègre et de fort, pénètre tout le livre, et en fait un excellent

to the supposed idea of his work he stood alone among all contemporary writers, inasmuch as, while we have instances of a tendency to extract the moral and spiritual truth enshrined in histories and legends, such for example, as the doctrine of the Resurrection from the story of the phœnix and the like, we have no single instance of the converse process being adopted, which is the assumption here;—that in spite of this writer's consummate ingenuity in the setting of broken fragments, it was nevertheless insufficient to escape the detection of acute critics whose microscopic perception invents where it cannot discover, and in spite of his great superiority to all sub-Apostolic Christian writers, his merit was so little appreciated, his hold on his own time so feeble, that every vestige of his name and personal history was suffered to perish, while writers of far inferior claims have been remem-

compagnon de voyage, le bréviaire exquis de celui qui poursuit des traces antiques sur les mers du Midi. Ce fut la seconde poésie du christianisme. Le lac de Tibériade et ses barques de pêcheurs avaient fourni la première. Maintenant, un souffle plus puissant, des aspirations vers les terres plus lointaines nous entraînent en haute mer." Saint Paul, p. 12. Our first thought on reading this is, How very beautiful if only true! our second, How much more beautiful *because* true!

bered, and while from the evidence before us we know that not one of *them* was equal to the production of such a work as the Acts of the Apostles.

Surely these facts are stumbling-blocks of some magnitude, which lie across the path of him who would adopt the proposed theory. But supposing them to be surmounted, is "the light which lighteth every man" so quenched within us that we cannot recognise the intensity of Divine Truth which shines in every part of this celebrated Treatise with a brilliancy which at once penetrates and reproves us? If this be so, then, verily, though an angel from heaven had written it, he would have written it in vain for us. It is not that the supposed critical difficulties are so great as to obscure the truth; but rather the truth, which shines on its own authority, finds so little place in the spiritual nature, that the mind fastens on every pretext which may serve to lessen its intensity. "The Light shineth in the darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not." It were absurd to suppose, if all the critical difficulties alleged were valid, and if they

were twice as weighty as they are, that they could avail to neutralise the force of the manifest spiritual truth which every where pervades this book. For even if it does not show historically what belief in the name of Jesus *did*, it does at least show us what belief in the name of Jesus *can avail to do*. And *if* that belief *is* as potent as the Acts of the Apostles *falsely* represent it *to have been*, it is useless attempting to prove the contrary by daring allegations of *such* falsehood, for the point that is denied is capable of being proved, on other grounds, to be true. If the Acts of the Apostles have taught us *this*, though not otherwise, we can afford to surrender not only the Apostolic origin of the book, but even its credibility. That were indeed an extreme, but by no means an impossible, position. It is, therefore, utterly unfair and disingenuous to insinuate that the spiritual authority of the book is destroyed or lessened *because* its historical authority is impaired. That would be the case if its spiritual authority were not capable of being established experimentally—a fact, however, to which the conscience of every Christian can bear independent witness.

The attacks that are now made upon the first Christian documents, and the distress of mind in many persons consequent thereupon, point from opposite directions to one and the same truth, namely, that the main function of Scripture has been forgotten. "Ye search the Scriptures, for in *them* ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of ME. And ye will not come to ME, that ye might have light." These pregnant words reveal to us the real mistake. We have not taken the Scriptures as a means, but as an end. They have not led us to CHRIST; and therefore, feeling that they have not done so, we are over-anxious at the thought of being deprived of them, because we think, and think rightly, that we cannot reach Him without them. But if they had really led us to Christ, we should know full well that even their loss could not deprive us of Him whom they had revealed to us. Our hold of Him would be independent of them, if it were once effectual. Our grasp, if firm, could not be relaxed, for we should grasp not them but Him. On the other hand, having really found Christ through the Scriptures, we should love the Scriptures for Christ's sake. We

should not lightly surrender them. We should not cavil at every little difficulty, and eagerly exaggerate it, as if we thought, or wished to think, that the validity of the obvious message conveyed by Scripture was affected thereby. We should not, in the absence of extraneous light on matters of authorship and the like, shut our eyes to the transcendent brilliancy of the inherent light which Scripture carries with it. In trying to measure the exact amount of human authority, we should not be forgetful of the manifest Divine authority, without which the highest human authority, if established, would be worthless, and with which the lowest human authority would be paramount.

For example, it seems impossible to believe that a person who really took in, and was convinced of, the spiritual truths contained in the Acts—such, for instance, as *the omnipotence of the name of Jesus as a resting-place for faith, and a motive for action*—could for a moment be persuaded that such a theory as the one advanced gave the true explanation of the origin of the book; still less that the probability of that theory being correct could

weigh with him so much as to neutralise the force of the spiritual truths contained in it, if they had been once received. Even supposing that the evidence for the traditional and the theoretical origin was evenly balanced, one would think that the manifest spiritual truth contained in the Acts would tend to show which origin was most probably correct. How much more, then, does the presence of such truth go to prove (in the entire want of every thing like *evidence* for the theory) that the traditional origin must be nearer the fact, even though, possibly, some links in the chain of evidence might be stronger, or more perfect, than they are? And most of all is it unreasonable and disingenuous to pretend that we are compelled to give up the traditional origin of the book, and with it the independent authority of the spiritual truth therein contained, *because* of the overwhelming evidence which has been advanced in support of the theory. For this evidence is purely imaginary, as the facts adduced in the Appendix tend to show. If, therefore, the true function of Scripture, as a means, and not an end, had been duly appreciated, such assaults as those, for instance, upon the Acts of the Apostles would never have

been made. First, the popular position of Scripture, as an end in itself, is legitimately and successfully assailed, but then it is forthwith forgotten, that though not an end in itself, it may be a means to a farther end, and that, in proving Scripture to be not an end, the two positions are left untouched, first, That Christ is alone the true End, and secondly, That Scripture may be, and is, the authorised means for reaching *that* End.

Now there can be no question whatever but that it is the tendency, if not the professed object, of criticism, to eliminate and get rid of this very spiritual truth of which we have spoken. For criticism assumes at the outset that no account can be taken of it. We are carefully to exclude every thing that appeals to our conscience, our feelings, or our will, in dealing with Scripture. But *if* the special function of Scripture is to appeal to these parts of our nature, how is it possible to do Scripture justice while resisting every such appeal? If Scripture is to judge *us*[6], it stands to reason that we must forego the func-

[6] St. John xii. 48.

tion of judge; consequently, the attitude of criticism is incompatible with that attitude of devout submission which Scripture itself demands. We may choose which we will, either one or the other, but it is delusive to suppose that we can choose both, and it is absurd to imagine that by the exercise of the one we can improve the other. Criticism is all very well up to a certain point, but when we begin to *worship*, we must cease to criticise; and the judge who is open to the considerations of pity is disqualified from being a judge. It is alleged to the discredit of Paley, that he was more of an advocate than a judge[7], but it was Paley's object to be an advocate, and it does not follow because an advocate supports a particular side, that therefore truth is not on that side. The issue raised by Christianity is of the most solemn importance, and we cannot be too careful or too judicial in deciding it; but, having decided it, we are fully justified in throwing the whole weight of our being into the maintenance of one side or the other, so that in neither case we swerve from truth. It is contrary to the interests of Christianity that it should be maintained at

[7] Jowett, i. 350.

any cost, and at all hazards, but it is no less contrary to those interests that we should be for ever regarding it as an open question, and under the pretext of pursuing criticism, be for ever re-opening questions which are virtually closed. Christianity is either true or false; if it is false, it is the business of every honest man to say so at once, in the name of humanity, and in the name of God—we might almost say, in the name of Christ, were it not that the real interests of Christianity are His interests; but if it is true, then it becomes the bounden *duty* of criticism, as well as of any other pursuit and faculty of man, to acknowledge and maintain its truth. The function of criticism *ceases* when Christ has been found true; it is only a nominal and false criticism which rests not till it has condemned Christ to death *because* He has made Himself the Son of God.

There are two points which the advocates of an extreme criticism are prone to overlook. First, that there is obviously a strong tendency in the critical eye to discover what it wishes to see. If we read any work with a professed object, we see

in it many things which but for that object we should not have seen; but because we see them, it by no means follows that they are there. We may have brought them with us. And this statement, which is true of those who read to believe, is true also of those who read to cavil. In the case of Scripture, however, the main features are so broad and so distinct, that as it is impossible not to see them, we must first, by common consent, agree that they be disregarded, in order that we may the more freely proceed to criticise. For, secondly, the matter expressed by these very distinct features is one confessedly beyond the reach of criticism. How is the fact of our Lord's unique personal union with God a matter upon which criticism can pronounce? Say that the fourth Gospel was not written by St. John, —there can be no question but that the unknown writer of that Gospel, who lived, we will suppose, in the second century (and these are the only two questions upon which criticism can pretend to pronounce), himself believed and fully intended to teach that Jesus was, in the highest possible sense—a sense which he has left transparently clear—the Son of God. Now this assertion is

supposed to come without Apostolic authority, but What if it be true? Criticism cannot tell us whether it is or not; but, *if* it is, nothing that criticism can do—for it has done all it can—is able or sufficient to make it false. The writer of the fourth Gospel evidently did not wish us to believe on *his* authority, for he has studiously concealed his name—he did not even write *as* St. John, only as *a* disciple and an eye-witness; but he expected us to believe on the authority of the things written, for the truth of which he, as an unknown, and so to say, an indifferent person, vouched [8]. He considered that these things were

[8] On the other hand, if the Gospel was written in the second century, we have to face this fact, That the writer not being St. John, wished his Gospel to pass for an Apostolic work, but nevertheless was careful for the sake of truth not to commit himself to the name of any one Apostle, but only spoke of himself by such periphrastic modes of speech as are altogether unintelligible if the tradition is incorrect, which understands by "the disciple whom Jesus loved," none other than the younger son of Zebedee. We not only know not who "that disciple" was, but still more, know not why a writer intending his work to pass as the work of some one Apostle should adopt a phrase which cannot be understood but for the tradition which interprets it of St. John. Such a phrase as "that disciple whom Jesus loved" must have been in vogue *before the Gospel was written*, and commonly applied to St. John, if a person wishing to have his work attributed to him made use of it to

sufficient to make us believe. He would have been the last to wish us to believe that *being true in themselves* they derived any additional truth from him, and certainly he considered that they had a power of proving themselves true to the end of time, quite independently of any critical questions that might arise as to *his* identity—a point which he designedly left in the dark. And we do maintain that criticism is stepping quite beyond its province, if it presumes to cast the slightest shadow of suspicion upon the exceptional union of Christ with God, as His only begotten Son, *because* it fancies there is ground for doubting the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel. This last is a question fairly within the scope of criticism, the other is one no less fairly beyond it, and each is a totally independent question.

It appears, then, to the writer, that in the present day, when very great unsettlement of mind is being produced and fostered by many reckless assertions made in the name of criticism, it cannot be useless to put the matter in this light.

that end; for he could have made use of it to no other. If the writer had in his mind no one particular disciple, he would not have particularised him as he did.

Comparatively few are capable of weighing or testing these assertions for themselves; meanwhile, the influence produced by them on the popular mind is most pernicious. They are repeated with great confidence in the periodical literature of the day, and even in newspapers; and not one in a hundred of those who read or repeat them is qualified to decide about their value; but they go on doing their work. They are gradually undermining, we will not say the popular belief in, but the popular *respect for*, the Bible; they are preparing the way for opinions touching the substance and authority of revelation, totally inconsistent with a reception of it as, in any strict sense, Divine; and, so far, they are bringing about results fatal to Christianity, for it is impossible that any thing worthy of the name can survive when the authority of Scripture as the standard of it is not recognised, and when the very substance of Scripture is destroyed. It may be well, then, to show first of all that some, at least, of these assertions are not true, that others at the best are doubtful, and that, even if they were all true, the consequences would not be what we are asked to believe they are.

With this end in view, the writer has tried to estimate the nature of the testimony to Christ which the letters of St. Paul afford. Those only are employed, however, which have escaped the assaults of criticism. To be sure, we might well have made the list a longer one; but our object was to take no writings except those which the severest criticism would concede. The Epistles to Rome, Corinth, and Galatia, are admitted on all hands to be genuine. No one of any weight has ever doubted them.

Taking these letters, then, as the acknowledged production of St. Paul, What are the conclusions we may fairly draw from them? It is one of the daring insinuations of modern times, that our received Christianity was invented by St. Paul. Men have been eager to seize upon differences between the Master and the disciple[9], wholly re-

[9] M. Renan regards St. Paul as a bold and original inventor. "Pour Paul, Jésus n'est pas un homme qui a vécu et enseigné; c'est le Christ qui est mort pour nos péchés, qui nous sauve, qui nous justifie; c'est un être tout divin: on participe de lui; on communie avec lui d'une façon merveilleuse; il est pour l'homme redemption, justification, sagesse, sainteté; il est le roi de gloire: toute puissance au ciel et sur la terre va bientôt lui être livrée: il n'est inférieur qu'à Dieu le Père. Si cette école seule nous avait transmis des écrits, nous ne toucherions pas la

gardless of his own precept, "Be ye followers of me, *even as I also am of Christ*[1]." They have not seen in these words an appeal to a contemporary

personne de Jésus, et nous pourrions douter de son existence. Mais ceux qui l'avaient connu et qui gardaient son souvenir écrivaient déjà peut-être vers ce temps les premières notes sur lesquelles ont été composés ces écrits divins (je parle des Évangiles), qui ont fait la fortune du christianisme, et nous ont transmis les traits essentiels du caractère le plus important à connaître qui fut jamais." Saint Paul, p. 310; cf. p. 275. While this testimony is of great value in showing that Christianity could not have been generated as a "myth" by Pauline teaching (for that which is declared to have been possible without Christ's historic existence could not have resorted to the expedient of inventing that existence to account for its own), we can but marvel at its daring perversion of the truth concerning him, whose boast it was to "know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," who "loved him and gave Himself for him." Of similar value and not less marvellously instructive are M. Renan's words, "Pour avoir une légende, il faut avoir parlé au cœur du peuple; il faut avoir frappé l'imagination. Or, que dit au peuple le salut par la foi, la justification par le sang du Christ?" Ibid p. 566. In direct contrast to this French "criticism" is that of Baur, who speaks (Paulus, p. 74) of the "inner revelation of Christ to the higher self-consciousness" of the Apostle, which, according to him, it was more or less the object of the writer of the Acts to portray in his narrative of the conversion. Now it is certain that Paul identified the Jesus who was crucified with the Christ who was manifested to his conscience, Gal. i. 16; ii. 20. What we have to ask, then, is, Are the two, upon the evidence, identical? If so, it must be fatal no less to "criticism" than to common sense to attempt to separate them.

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 1.

verdict, which must have been given against him, if either his teaching had been at variance with Christ, or at variance with that of other Apostles. Those who have fastened most tenaciously on the misunderstanding with Peter, in Galatians ii., upon a particular point of conduct, have ignored altogether the tacit evidence afforded, even by that chapter, in the implied submission of Peter, and by such chapters as 1 Cor. i., iii., to the substantial identity of the Gospel preached by all the Apostles. That which exclusively arrogates to itself the name of criticism too often insists upon looking at things in only one point of view, regardless of the greater unity and harmony which can be gained from another. But in so doing, it forfeits its title to the name, for it is the judgment of a biassed judge, and not the judgment of strict impartiality, which carefully weighing the respective merits of rival hypotheses, ultimately decides upon the most probable, for the sole reason that it is so.

Now the evidence to be derived from St. Paul's known writings cannot be considered less than conclusive upon this question, as to the nature

of his Gospel. It is written in letters broad and deep, which to the end of time will be simply ineffaceable, that, from first to last, CHRIST JESUS was the sum and substance of his preaching. A Work done by Christ, a power resident in the Person of Christ, on account of that Work,—these were the solitary themes on which the Apostle was for ever dwelling, and which in one form or another are interwoven with all his teaching, and inseparably mingled with all his thoughts. With him Christ is literally *all in all.* The terrible imprecation denounced by him upon any man, or angel, who proclaimed another Gospel, would have recoiled with triple vengeance on his own head, if the Jesus he had preached had not been *the* Jesus who, upon any supposition, could only have been known from that mass of early teaching which was shortly afterwards, if not then, embodied in the Gospels[2]. To suppose

[2] Once more, it shall be the last time, we cannot forbear to quote from M. Renan. Speaking of our Apostle, he says (Saint Paul, p. 327), "En toute chose ancêtre véritable du protestantisme, Paul a les défauts d'un protestant. Il faut du temps et bien des expériences pour arriver à voir qu'aucun dogme ne vaut la peine de résister en face et de blesser la charité. Paul n'est pas Jésus. Que nous sommes loin de toi, cher maître! Où

that St. Paul was the inventor of received Christianity, we are constrained to ask, What became of the unreceived Christianity? What became of the Jesus whom Paul did not preach, who, we may suppose, did not die, and did not rise again? To magnify any divergences that may have existed between the early teachers of Christianity into supposed indications of divergent Gospels, is not only to be out of sympathetic

est ta douceur, ta poésie? Toi qu'une fleur enchantait, et mettait dans l'extase, reconnais-tu bien pour tes disciples ces disputeurs, ces hommes acharnés sur leur prérogative, qui veulent que tout relève d'eux seuls. Ils sont des hommes, tu fus un dieu. Où serions-nous, si tu ne nous étais connu que par les rudes lettres de celui qui s'appelle ton apôtre? Heureusement les parfums de Galilée vivent encore dans quelques mémoires fidèles. Peut-être déjà le discours sur la montagne est-il écrit sur quelque feuille secrète. Le disciple inconnu qui porte ce trésor porte vraiment l'avenir." How was it, then, that Jesus came to die, if not because He made Himself the Son of God? Was that "a dogma"? Was it worth resisting unto blood for it? Did Jesus expect His disciples to do likewise, or did He not? St. Luke xiv. 26, 27. The insinuation is that St. Paul's Gospel was essentially different from the original Gospel of the companions of Christ, and therefore of inferior authority; that it was, in fact, a *spurious* Gospel. As then on the assumption his was later in order of time, we must honestly face such statements as Gal. i. 6—12; 1 Cor. iii. 22; xi. 23—26; xv. 11; 2 Cor. ii. 17; xi. 4, &c., before accepting the proposed theory.

harmony with, but also to run deliberately counter to, the unmistakable evidence of his words, who said, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to *every man*[3]?"

Now, if there is evident proof that the substance of what St. Paul taught was identical with the Gospel which was received from other Apostles[4] (a fact which is proved by implication, from

[3] 1 Cor. iii. 5.

[4] The divergence is commonly supposed to be greatest between St. Paul and St. James. It is instructive, therefore, to observe the points of belief that they must have had in common, showing the substantial identity of the Gospel which they preached.

St. James (i. 1) calls himself "a servant of God *and of the Lord Jesus Christ*," implying thereby the unity of God and Christ—the Sonship of Jesus.

"Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." i. 18. Cf. Eph. ii. 1, 17. "The engrafted word, which is able to *save your souls*." This was clearly the word before mentioned, which concerned Jesus Christ. i. 1.

"Hath not God *chosen*" (Rom. ix.) "the poor of this world, *rich in faith*" (Cf. Eph. iii. 8), "and heirs of the *kingdom*?" (Cf. Col. iv. 11.)

"Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." ii. 10. This grand statement virtually implies the whole of the so-called Pauline principle of justification. Cf. Rom. iii. 20. [St.

his own writings), then the other fact, that he became acquainted with that Gospel, not from intercourse with, but independently of, them, is itself a confirmation of his mission. It is not true to say, that we have merely his own authority for having been recognised as an Apostle, because the very fact of his writing to the Roman Christians, for example, whom he had never seen, with the authority he assumed, is the fullest possible proof of it. Not to say, that his equality with the old Apostles, of which he boasted publicly, would have been thrown in his teeth by

St. James frequently speaks of God as the "Father." Cf. Gal. iv. 6.

Lastly, St. James speaks of the "coming of the Lord" (v. 7, 8), which assumes by implication His Death, Resurrection, and Ascension.

In addition to these there are many other verbal coincidences, showing similarity of thought and teaching, which are too numerous to specify.

The fact is that every one who has really imbibed the spirit of any single writer in the New Testament *feels* his essential agreement with all the rest. He who has really taken in the *truth* of the Epistle to the Romans, knows that it is identical with that of St. John, and *vice versâ*. He who has *learnt* of the Epistle to the Ephesians, finds himself refreshed, confirmed, invigorated by the spirit of the same Christ which pervades the synoptical Gospels. He sees that it is the same, and not another.

those to whom he wrote, had it been nothing but an empty boast. No; this fact is clearly proved from St. Paul's own writings, *without the aid of the Acts of the Apostles*, that his mission was recognised as valid by the original companions of Christ. Whatever sectarian preferences may have been manifested for one teacher above another by "carnal" Christians, the fact admits of no doubt that Paul by the Apostolic body was considered an Apostle. His claim was duly recognised. Whatever party prejudice may have done in opposition to his work, however it may have depreciated him, however these assertions of his may have added to its virulence, no candid mind can for a moment suppose otherwise than that they establish his real position as one of irremovable security. He would not have thrown down his challenge in open court, before the Church, and before the whole world, if he had not been quite sure that no man *then living* could take it up. This was his first appeal, and if he could make that good, he needed to have no anxiety (and we need to have none) about the ultimate verdict of posterity. *They* would still hold him to be "not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles."

When, however, in addition to these internal proofs, we are enabled to add the external evidence of the Acts of the Apostles, as a *credible* history (and the Appendix shows it to be *not incredible upon the reasons assigned*), our position becomes, perhaps, not actually more secure, but certainly less open to attack than it was supposed to be. When that book is accepted as the genuine composition of St. Paul's fellow-traveller, then our sources of external testimony run up as high as they possibly can, and the condition of uncertainty, and of baffled perplexity of mind, gives place to one of overflowing gratitude for the abundance of the proofs which are available for the confirmation of the Faith. Then the old-fashioned belief of the Apostles' Creed and the Universal Church of Christ becomes, after all, not absolutely so incredible as we were assured it was. Then we begin to see that it is not so much our *Creed* that requires to be reconstituted, or reconstructed, as the personal Faith by which we hold it that needs to be modified, re-adjusted, confirmed, and strengthened.

Firmly believing, then, as we ourselves do, in

the Divine origin of that Creed, and in its eternal verity, we shall ever feel devoutly thankful to Almighty God, if, as we humbly trust, it may please Him, of His infinite mercy, so to bless the labour of our hands, as to make it instrumental to the confirmation of belief in Jesus Christ, conducive to a stronger and firmer hold on the central facts and the vital doctrines of His Gospel.

July 20, 1869.

ERRATUM

Page 128, line 7, *for* when *read* where

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LECTURE I

THE EARLY HISTORY OF ST. PAUL

Acts xxvi. 4, 5

"*My manner of life from my youth, which was from the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.*"

SUCH was the confession of the Apostle Paul, at Cæsarea, to the second Agrippa. He had been two years[1] in prison under Felix, who had once "trembled," not indeed without cause, "as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come[2]," and now he was the prisoner of Porcius Festus, who had "come into Felix' room," as procurator of Judea. Agrippa, who enjoyed the title of "king," reigned over the northern and north-eastern provinces of Abilene, Ituræa, Batanæa, and Trachonitis[3], and was now on a visit with his sister Bernice to the governor of the neighbouring province. "With great pomp" they

[1] Acts xxiv. 27. [2] Acts xxiv. 25.

[3] Josephus, B. J. ii. 12. 8.

had "entered into the place of hearing with the chief captains and principal men of the city," and "at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth[4]." He gave on this occasion, as we all remember, the third narrative of his conversion, which is preserved in the history of the Acts. But in addition to this he appeals, as in the text, to the well-known circumstances of his earlier life. That he had previously been known as a zealous and earnest Pharisee appears on the surface of the narrative to admit of no shadow of doubt. "What my manner of life was from the first," he says, "all the Jews well know." And this we must bear in mind was spoken, possibly, in the presence of many Jews, apparently in the hearing, either actual or virtual, of those Jews who were his accusers[5], and certainly before one who "was expert in all customs and questions which were among the Jews[6]."

We will, therefore, with the help of God, endeavour in the present Course of Lectures, in the first place, to investigate the amount and character of the evidence which exists in support of this fact, to see what ground there is for believing it, what reason there may be for doubting it, examining the materials before us with as little bias and as much impartiality as we can bring to bear upon them, so that, if possible, the conclusion we draw may be trustworthy and correct. Having,

[4] Acts xxv. 23. [5] Acts xxvi. 2. 7. [6] Acts xxvi. 3.

then, determined whether or not St. Paul's early life was such as is commonly believed, we will inquire in the next place into the evidence there is of a great change of sentiment, or revulsion of feeling, having passed upon him, and endeavour to ascertain to what cause or causes this can be ascribed. After this we will try to discover what is the nature of the belief embodied in his writings, and how we are to estimate his character, conduct, and influence, together with the position he seems to have held in relation to the Church at large and to other Apostles. Lastly, we will seek to ascertain the character of his mission and the motives by which he was influenced, inquiring, as far as possible critically, the ground there is for believing that the phenomena presented by his writings and history are exceptional or otherwise, so that we may be enabled to form a fair estimate of the bearing which they have upon the received facts of Christianity. THE WITNESS OF ST. PAUL TO CHRIST, then, will be the subject of the Course of Lectures upon which we are now entering.

Assuming that the history is substantially correct, and that some at least of the writings are genuine, we shall endeavour dispassionately to inquire what is the conclusion to which they point? On the lowest supposition that out of deference to the scruples of the adversary we may be compelled to make, what is the inference to be drawn from the residue which emerges from the crucible

of his criticism? If I mistake not there is a very considerable element which is utterly indestructible. The nature and weight of this element it will be the object of the following Lectures to investigate, and, if possible, to ascertain, and that too in a manner so generally intelligible and popular, that we may not unreasonably hope to win the sympathy and arouse the interest of those who hear them.

It may, however, be expedient to state at the commencement what is the kind of audience we anticipate, and therefore the character of the remarks addressed to them. It is absurd, then, to suppose that the professed and determined Infidel will come here to be confuted. It will consequently be useless to address ourselves to him. We shall not do so. Such a person, it is not probable, will either hear or read what we may have to say. Moreover, it is one of the peculiar features of our age, that it is by no means easy to put one's finger on any such person. In days like ours, of rapid and general intercommunication, when thought is widely and speedily disseminated, one natural result is the effacement of the broader lines of demarcation. The colours blend imperceptibly, and the sharper contrasts are lost. It is more likely, therefore, that the believer may become infected with the doubt of unbelief, and the unbeliever imbibe, unconsciously, some of the principles and maxims of belief, than that the believer

should be wholly faithful or the unbeliever altogether infidel. Except in rare instances, this is not the case. But, in point of fact, the doubt and perplexity of mind which are inseparable from an age marked by great activity of thought have a manifest tendency to enter into the mental constitution of us all. The cold shadow of denial and of indecision falls athwart the pathway of the upright and the earnest. It is these who are exposed to the assaults of unbelief, and are liable to suffer from them most acutely. It is these, therefore, who require to be established.

And it would seem that this is the real and practical use of such a foundation as the one from which I now address you, not primarily to attempt to confute those who, in fact, will not be confuted, but to furnish the undecided, the wavering, the doubtful, and not seldom the erring and the misinformed, with such a representation of the case for Christ, that the truth may be placed for them in a light before unseen, and so may gain in attractiveness and force, while, at the same time, the subtle and insinuating influence of doubt and falsehood may be counteracted.

It must be understood, therefore, that this will be the direct object of the present Lectures, not so much to reach the professed unbeliever in what are practically his inaccessible retreats, as rather to cut off occasion from him when he desires, and, indeed, is not unlikely to find, occasion of stumbling

and overthrow, in the minds of those who are not as yet wholly on his side, though they may not be altogether opposed to, or prepared and equipped for resisting, him.

The thesis, then, which it will be my endeavour to establish, is as follows. *It is not possible to account for the phenomena which the writings and the history of St. Paul present to us, except upon the supposition of certain facts which are substantially those of the Gospels.*

Now the first consideration is, what are the materials before us? These are, of course, wholly comprised in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles of St. Paul. Any thing else that tradition may have preserved to us must not be reckoned. We have no right, and shall have no occasion, to draw upon the resources of tradition. With regard, then, to the Acts of the Apostles, it is no part of my design to enter now into the critical history of this book. I take it as a mere literary phenomenon, having an undoubted antiquity of some eighteen hundred years. It is a matter of, comparatively speaking, little importance to determine the exact place or date of its composition, or to decide definitely who was its author. Supposing it to have been written by Luke, or Silas, or Timotheus, or by any two, or by all three of them—it matters not—in each case it still falls within the very first age of the Church's

existence, while there must have been many among the Christians still alive who were able to remember some or other of the events related, many who were more or less familiar with them all; not, indeed, in every case by personal experience, but as matters of hearsay and of common notoriety. There must have been many, at whatever possible age we fix the composition of this book, who, at that time, could have detected the writer in any flagrant departure from the truth. Supposing, as we must suppose, it to have been in common circulation among the Christians, it is a proof, at any rate, that they had for some reason or other agreed together to receive it. There is no evidence or proof of its being questioned, not as a canonical book—with that we have now nothing to do—but as a generally trustworthy narrative of the events it professes to record[7]. There is no vestige remaining of any other treatise which gave a different version of the same events. If any such treatise at any time existed, and was intentionally suppressed by a party among the Christians, why was not this treatise similarly suppressed by the other party? There are not wanting heretical treatises and spurious gospels, which are sufficient

[7] The rejection of it by the Marcionites and Manichæans in the third and fourth centuries was purely on dogmatic, and not upon historic grounds: see Tertullian, adv. Marc. v. 2; Augustine, Ep. 237. 2; Euseb. iv. 29, quoted by Mr. Humphry in the Introduction to his Commentary on the Acts. See also the Appendix.

to show the possibility of some such apocryphal narrative being put forth and maintaining its existence, but where is it[8]? We may, without risk of contradiction, assert that this narrative appears to have received the general credence of such a contemporary public as it must have, in the nature of things, encountered. Are we to believe that among those Churches in which it circulated, be they many or few, there were no persons of a sufficiently critical mind, none so naturally disputatious as to reject this book, if it was not a generally accurate record of events, if there was not ground for believing it to be in the main veracious?

Suppose that, instead of its being some eighteen centuries old, it was only just published in our own time, what should we think of it now? We must, of course, suppose also that there were certain known events and certain familiar topics in vogue to which it referred; for otherwise its very appearance would be unaccountable. But knowing of this general framework of circumstance, how should we estimate the book itself, judging it critically? Should we be justified in saying it was a romance? Would it read like fiction? Could we honestly say that it had the appearance

[8] See for example Tischendorf's *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha ex triginta codicibus Græcis*, &c., for proof of this statement, and in evidence of the entire and specific independence of the Canonical Acts of the Apostles.

of being written for the purpose of giving after ages a concrete historic portrait of certain abstract phases of thought? Or would it not rather strike us as being manifestly straightforward, and as having undoubtedly the intention of being true? Would not the aim of the writer plainly be to give his readers what he considered a clear and distinct narrative of the events he was relating? If the book had just appeared, so that we could look at it without the mist and haze of distance, is there any opinion but one that we could form of it, namely, that it was the work of a writer whose object was evidently to give a faithful picture of current or of recent events, that he was sufficiently well instructed for his work, and had performed it in the main without partiality and without deliberate and designed suggestion of the false or suppression of the true?

There is, of course, one point which we must reserve, and that is the miraculous element of which it is so full. But, waiving this, I ask what is the obvious and unquestionable character of its ordinary historic element? There is only one answer to be given. If we had now for the first time become acquainted with this book as a recent publication, we should at once pronounce it a genuine and authentic record of contemporary or almost contemporary events—the transcript of a period in which the writer himself had played an active and important part.

It may, however, not unnaturally be asked, Is not the very existence of this miraculous element to which I have referred, itself a proof that the general character of the book is unsatisfactory and unsound? But here, also, the answer must be, No; and for this reason: That the mixture of the supernatural with the narrative has a direct bearing on the interpretation, but not upon the course of events. For example, we read in the sixteenth chapter, that when Paul had for the first time come to Troas, and was apparently undecided in what direction he should travel next, he was induced to pass over into Macedonia, in consequence of a vision which appeared to him by night. Now it is plain that both the writer and the Apostle believed that this vision was, in the strictest sense, sent by God, and that it was intended to determine their route, which was shaped accordingly. Well! they may or may not have been right in their decision, and in their way of interpreting the dream. But will any man of common sense maintain that, because of the introduction of this dream, the whole narrative is vitiated as a record of fact? Are we to suppose that Paul and his company did not pass over into Macedonia, that they never were at Troas on this occasion? Is the journey invented for the sake of the vision? Or is the vision a mere accident of the journey, which we may accept or reject as we please, and certainly interpret as we please, without in the

slightest degree damaging the character of the historian for general and intentional veracity? A man of ardent temperament, like St. Paul, finding himself in such a position, on the verge of one continent and actually within sight of the shores of another, may very probably have seen such a vision, and very likely interpreted it thus; but whether he did or not, how does that affect the question of his being at Troas just before passing over to Macedonia? How does it invalidate the evidence of his having been at either place, of his having travelled to the north of Greece from the north-west of Asia Minor? It simply leaves that evidence where it was; it makes it neither greater nor less.

Again, take the narrative in the second chapter. Here it is far more difficult to separate the miraculous elements from those of ordinary history. Indeed, one cannot do so with any degree of certainty. But is not this perfectly clear, that, however we may explain the tongues of fire, or the divers languages which were said to be recognised by men of divers nations, the writer, at least, stated what struck him as a marvellous phenomenon? he was not consciously imposing upon his readers. On the day of Pentecost the disciples "were all with one accord in one place[9]." Some strange circumstance did occur. Peter was the first to make use of it. He did use it substantially in the

[9] Acts ii. 1.

manner he is said to have done. And whether or not actually "three thousand souls" were "added unto them" "the same day[1]," at least there seems to have been a large and a sudden accession to the Church about that time; and however *we* may account for it, this was the *only* account the disciples had to give of it. The substantial veracity of the narrative, as a narrative of historic fact, remains, whatever view we choose to take of the miraculous features of it. The historian himself does not explain these features, he merely records them; and in some respects he does it not without obscurity and ambiguity; but still throughout he evidently is stating what he himself fully believed to be true. *On the level of common life*, at least, there seems to be no antecedent ground for distrusting him.

We take him then, for the moment, on this level only, leaving as unexplained, but possibly not inexplicable, the supernatural elements of his narrative; What, then, is the impression which the simple record of the common life of the early Church and its more conspicuous actors has upon us? Is it not manifestly this, That the life which Peter, and John, and Paul, and Barnabas, and Silas, and Timothy are there depicted as leading is at once a supernatural life? Can we otherwise account for it? Was such a life ever exhibited elsewhere than in this very book of the Acts of

[1] Acts ii. 41.

the Apostles? We get it nowhere even in the Old Testament. We get it not even in the Gospels; for they are wholly occupied with *one* yet more transcendent life. We get it still less in the acts and annals of the saints and martyrs. For the lives which they depict are possible after the history of the Gospels and the Acts, but impossible before it. But whether or not in the abstract impossible, as a matter of notorious fact they are nowhere to be found. There is no reason to doubt that the historian was telling the literal truth when he represented the testimony of the first disciples, which was testimony to supposed fact, as exciting the enmity and the vigorous opposition of the rulers of the Jews, the Sadducees, and the civil authority. When he says that they were put into "the common prison[2]," were "beaten[3]," that they nevertheless "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name[4]," that "daily in the temple and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ[5]," there is no reason whatever to suppose that he is not stating what is strictly true. Indeed a sober and straightforward view of the matter can with difficulty arrive at any other conclusion. But yet what is the meaning of such conduct as this? How is it to be explained? Were

[2] Acts v. 18.
[3] Acts v. 40.
[4] Acts v. 41.
[5] Acts v. 42.

the men who thus acted mad? Were they the victims of strong delusion? If the history which represents them as thus acting is true, there is no other inference possible, if we reject the supposition that their madness rested upon a strong foundation of fact, and, indeed, was not madness.

Such, then, is the amount of worth which we claim in the first place for the history of the Acts. We believe that in matters of ordinary life the historian intends to state the truth; that if in minor details he has even erred through ignorance, he has not done so to any great extent, nor thereby thrown discredit on his story as a whole; that in sequence of events, in portraiture of character, in imputation of motive and the like, he is substantially to be trusted. Even in his handling of the supernatural we believe him to have been honest, if, possibly, misinformed or superstitious. He did not give his narrative this colouring for the sake of doing so, but because he looked at events in this light, so that they assumed this colour; but the events themselves were not altered, they were only relieved and heightened, as the hills at sunrise show more golden and glorious than they do at noontide. It was his to behold events on which rested the first golden dawn of the Sun of righteousness. He saw them aright, and he depicted them as he saw them. To us, looking on the same events, they

seem distant and hazy, but let us not for that reason question the writer's honesty, nor affirm that when they first were seen there was no golden glimmer, no roseate hues of sunrise resting on their summit, while their base was overshadowed and dark with the dewy mist of morning. The bare outline in both cases at morn and noontide is the same. We ourselves can recognise the sameness. The mountains are real mountains, but, flushed with the tints of the new-born day, they gleam like the palaces of gods more than the strong foundations of the earth.

So also is it here: we can see that the events are real events, that the actors in them are real persons, with human flesh and blood; but a heavenly light rests on them which is shed but once in the daytime of the world's life. There is a glory which is the glory of the morn, and it is destined before long to "fade into the light of common day;" but they would not be wise who should affirm, their own lot being cast in the common day, that the golden glories of the morn had never ushered in the coming of the day.

Neither, again, is it a valid objection to this early history of the Church, to complain of the obscurity which rests upon some of its details. We cannot, for example, understand, it may be, the career of the Church immediately subsequent to the day of Pentecost. At first every thing seems to go well with it. Thousands are gathered into its pale.

"A great company of the priests are obedient to the faith[6]." The Apostles are able to speak the word with boldness[7] and with comparative security, till at last, as it seems quite suddenly, the tide changes, and there is nothing but enmity and resistance where before there was apparently carelessness and indifference. What are we to say to this? Are we to pronounce it incredible? to say that it stamps the history as inconsistent with itself? and therefore to reject it as idealised and half mythical? Surely not. There is no process so unintelligible as growth. We cannot detect the growth of a seed, or the growth of a tree, or the growth of a child. Taken at separate intervals of time, we can in every case detect the difference, and the difference is the growth. But the transition itself we cannot see; and if with minute and microscopic watching we can detect it, yet the *principle* of growth remains concealed: *how* the seed grows, or the tree or the child grows, we know not. There are intermediate stages which we cannot detect, still less understand. The one may well seem to contradict the other. *Why* one should follow from the other we know not. "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body;" and beyond this we

[6] Acts vi. 7. [7] Acts iv. 31.

cannot go. It is a profound mystery, inscrutable, unfathomable. But it is analogous to the early history of the Church. There is a mystery attaching to that. The earliest stages of growth are the most obscure. They are enveloped in obscurity. If, therefore, these early Christian records were yet more obscure than they really are, it would not be strange. The separate intervals of change are clearly marked. The chief stages of growth are plainly and minutely registered. There is nothing uncertain or obscure about them; it is the intervals between them, in which lie hidden those processes that correspond to the secret operations or principles of growth, that are difficult and obscure. It is these that elude our investigation. And the sudden change from apparent prosperity to persecution was at once a means of growth to the early Church, and is the proof of it. The Church had grown. It had forced itself on the attention of society. The change came perhaps almost imperceptibly, and the record of it perplexes us from its suddenness —but needlessly, for all is natural, and, within certain limits, intelligible. We invent a difficulty for ourselves, when we say that the record is inconsistent. Its very inconsistency is, to a certain extent, a witness to the general honesty of the writer which I am willing to maintain.

There is, however, another and an independent source of information upon the subject in hand to

which we must now advert, namely, the Epistles of St. Paul. By the most extreme school of critics the genuineness of some of these has been disputed, and though we might well be pardoned for treating all the received Epistles as genuine, it will nevertheless be more in accordance with the plan we propose to adopt if we appeal to those only which have been accepted, not merely by the Church at large, but also by these critics themselves. The list which will then remain to us is, indeed, a narrow one, but it will be more than sufficient for our purpose.

Assuming, then, that the four Epistles to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans are undoubtedly the work of St. Paul, we will content ourselves with these. All the evidence we adduce shall be drawn exclusively from them. But this evidence we will endeavour to estimate in such a manner as to learn from it the kind of witness which the history and the writings of St. Paul afford to Christ.

First, then, with regard to his early history. From the Acts of the Apostles there is no shadow of doubt as to the character of his youth and early manhood. At the stoning of the first martyr, Stephen, "the witnesses," we are told, "laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul." Whoever may have written this narrative, there is no valid ground for questioning its accuracy. Saul, no doubt, did take charge of the

raiment of these men. At the time he was himself a young man. It is evident, moreover, that he thoroughly sympathised with the atrocious act of violence he was witnessing. His ardent temperament, of which his writings are evidence, would naturally make him an eager partisan; and warmly attached to the traditions of his fathers, he was prepared to go any lengths in maintaining them, rather than consent to half measures with the opposite party, which would seem to him like a wretched compromise, possessing the disadvantages of both sides and the merits of neither. There is, therefore, no inherent improbability in this conduct of Saul, supposing him to have been brought up, as he no doubt was, in devoted adherence to the national faith.

There is also another allusion to the same circumstance in the Acts of the Apostles, which is put into the mouth of St. Paul himself. In his speech, on the stairs of the castle, to the people in Jerusalem, he gives the substance of a prayer he had addressed to Jesus in the Temple while in a trance, and makes the like confession in it: "Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on Thee: and when the blood of Thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him." Now this speech was either spoken or it was not. If it was not spoken, it is plain that the

writer of it thought it consistent with the known facts of Paul's life, or at least thought that his readers would not detect its inconsistency. If it was spoken, then it is far more than probable that some such allusion as this was made in it, for there is no direct necessity for the occurrence of such an allusion here—it is merely the introduction to a reply which contained the whole ground of offence against the now exasperated people, "Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."

I say, then, that going no farther than the Acts of the Apostles, which, for the present, we assume to be trustworthy, there seems to be sufficient ground for believing that Saul of Tarsus had been a zealous Jew, that he had even taken part in the persecutions against the Church, or at least had been an abettor of the murder of Stephen, the first martyr.

Let us turn now to the undisputed writings of St. Paul himself. The first[8] reference to his early life which occurs in these, is found in the 15th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians: "For I," he says, "am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God." Now this, it seems, is not questioned as the authentic and sincere confession of St. Paul, but if so, nothing can be more consistent with the narrative of the Acts.

[8] First in received order, perhaps not first in order of time.

We have from his own lips an admission of the general accuracy of that narrative, at least in this particular. It is, however, in the Epistle to the Galatians that he is most explicit. That Epistle, being addressed to persons who had relapsed from Christianity to semi-Judaism, afforded occasion for reference to the circumstances of his own early life that was not demanded elsewhere. And here it is that he says, "Ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers;" and again, "They had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed." This again is the unchallenged acknowledgment of the Apostle, and it confirms substantially the statements which are preserved to us under the form of history in the Acts. There is, therefore, all things considered, every reason to conclude that the well-known writer of these Epistles, the great founder of Gentile Christianity, was, in the early period of his life, not only a Jew (for the great proportion of early Christians were necessarily Jews), but also, as a Jew, had taken a prominent and active part in the persecution of those in his nation who had renounced allegiance to Moses for obedience to the faith of Christ. The evidence is

at once abundant and conclusive. If we believe any statement whatever on the authority of recorded testimony, we may well believe this. We cannot venture to doubt it without opening the door to every species of historic doubt.

The first position, then, at which I desire to arrive in the course of my argument may not improperly be stated thus: On the evidence of anonymous but contemporary historic records preserved in the Acts of the Apostles, and on that of the confession of St. Paul himself twice made in the Epistle to the Galatians, and once in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, it appears that there is no reason whatever to question the fact that the great Apostle had at one period of his life been a vehement opponent of Christ, and a strenuous persecutor of the Church. This as a bare and naked fact must stand, I apprehend, undisputed. It must be received as a proven and established fact.

There is, indeed, but one point about it which admits of question, and that is the *degree* of vehemence with which this hatred and persecution was manifested and carried on. It may be said, That though there doubtless must be some truth in the representations of St. Paul's early career, given us by the records of the Church and referred to by himself, yet it is more than probable that these have been highly coloured and exaggerated. The tendency of his own mind would naturally be

to speak in no measured language of his former life, and a similar propensity would be not unlikely to develope itself in the Church at large. But these must each of them be corrected in their results by a more sober and critical judgment. We must receive both his personal statements and those of tradition with a spirit of cautious reserve. We must interpret them with a certain allowance for human nature, and remember that the agents in every case were men. The conduct of Saul may have been hostile to the Christians, but not so hostile as they and he have represented it.

Now when we gather together every thing that Scriptural tradition has preserved to us on this matter, the sum total is by no means large. It would seem, then, there is not a great deal of room for exaggeration. Even in the martyrdom of Stephen, Saul is not accused of taking an active, but rather a subordinate and subsidiary part. The direct testimony of the historian is mainly comprised in two brief statements: "As for Saul, he made havock of the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison." "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them

bound unto Jerusalem." This is literally all that the historian of the Acts, in his own person, says upon this subject. Every thing else is either put into the mouth of other persons, as, for example, Ananias, or stated directly by Paul himself. And in these two brief sentences it must be allowed there is but small scope for exaggeration. In fact the only reasonable conclusion can be that the narrative is unadorned.

And, indeed, we must admit also that the language of St. Paul himself is scarcely open to the charge of exaggeration; the brief allusions in the two Epistles I have mentioned are by no means extravagant. Nay, we might say as much of the allusion in the first Epistle to Timothy, if we were not absolved from the necessity of doing so by the attitude of our critical opponents who deny the genuineness of this Epistle. The language every where used by him is language that may well be adopted by all Christians who have a befitting sense of their personal sinfulness. It is neither inappropriate nor extreme. So that on every ground we have no cause to impute exaggeration or embellishment to the representations of Saul's early life which tradition has preserved to us. It must still remain an unquestioned fact that he began his career as a determined persecutor of the faith which he afterwards so zealously and successfully preached.

But it may be said that no one disputes this,

which is very true. I am not at present arguing for the establishment of points which are disputed. My object is rather to impress upon you the nature of the ground we in common occupy. I would ask you first to survey the depth, breadth, and solidity of the foundation upon which we propose to build, in order that the strength of the superstructure may be the better estimated.

The days are changed since men, as in the time of Boyle, were either believers in the Christian faith, or else were open impugners of it. Now the border-line is less distinctly marked. Men do not wholly disbelieve, but neither are they altogether Christians. And it is the duty of persons charged with a responsible office such as ours to take up a position unmistakably and decidedly Christian, and from that position with all the advantages it offers, and the resources it supplies, to win from the half-hearted and the unresolved such tracts of territory as they are but too willing to concede to the open adversary of Christ. This, far from touching upon "controversies that are among Christians themselves," will have by God's grace the direct result of winning souls to Christ, and also of showing to the conscience of the lukewarm Christian, who in an unfair sense is ready to become "all things to all men[9]," including among the "all" "him that believeth" with the "infidel[1]," that there are limits even to the free-

[9] 1 Cor. ix. 22. [1] 2 Cor. vi. 15.

dom of professedly Christian thought, and that certain conclusions may follow necessarily and inevitably from premises which he himself does not dispute, and cannot but allow to be sound. If there is a difference between the true and the false, between the "altogether" and the "almost" "Christian[2]," which Scripture most certainly would lead us to suppose, then this cannot be a wrong, but must be a legitimate, course to take, and one contemplated assuredly by the spirit, if not comprehended actually within the letter, of the Founder's will; for it endeavours "to prove the Christian religion" to be so grounded in right reason and the truth of fact, as that not only "Atheists, Theists," and the like may be shown its reasonableness, but that others also by a just recognition of its claims, which they themselves are disposed to forget rather than deny, may be led to give it their more exclusive and undivided allegiance.

My object, then, will be to show from the unquestioned facts of St. Paul's history, and the direct statements of his acknowledged writings, the kind of testimony he bears to Christ—to estimate the character and the value of this testimony —the bearing which it really has upon the faith of the Church in all ages, as well as upon the attitude which believers should assume with reference to those who profess direct unbelief, or the

[2] Acts xxvi. 28.

far more numerous class who, liking to dally with the attractions of a reckless and daring scepticism, are deterred from committing themselves with the whole heart and soul to Christ. I shall endeavour throughout to view this matter with special reference to the tone of thought and feeling prevalent in our day, believing that I shall by this means act most fully in accordance with the implied and expressed intentions of the Founder.

For if the great landmarks of thought have changed in the last two centuries, if the ancient adversaries have assumed a modern guise, and the position likewise of the defenders as well as the assailants has been shifted, yet the interest at stake is the same as ever, the questions to be solved are virtually the same, however diversely we may state them. Christ is still the Captain of our salvation, for whose honour we are jealous; the powers of evil arrayed against us are evil still; their tactics may be different, but their object is the same; it is to get possession of the citadel of truth, and to drive out from it the garrison of faith; it is to dethrone the Most High, and to rob the Anointed of His crown. This may be done under the subtle and insidious pretext of a professed Christianity or a professed zeal for truth, and done perhaps more effectually than, as before, under the flaunting banners of an undisguised Deism, or by the assaults of an open Atheism; but it is the office of those who are appointed to be sentinels on Zion to sound the

watchword, not indeed of any party in their Master's host, but of their Master Himself, if so be that some who were attempting to enter the fortress under the colour of a false friendship may be induced to reconsider their position. It is, indeed, true that Christ said, "He that is not against us is on our part;" but He said likewise, "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth." A method corresponding to the former statement may be preferred by some, but the method also of the latter was followed by Christ, and as occasion befalls may be demanded of us. It will be our object then so to estimate the allowed facts of St. Paul's life as to determine thereby to what kind of belief in Christ they pledge us; to ascertain the force of the argument which may be advanced for Christianity from the due consideration of these facts; and to show that there is neither logic nor wisdom in accepting certain facts while we deny the inevitable conclusions to which they point. Such a course, if not immediately directed against the avowed enemies of Christianity, specified by the Founder's will, must nevertheless have the result, not only of refuting as far as may be these adversaries, but also of detecting the weakness of others, who under the guise of a kind of sympathy with Christ are neither earnest nor sound in their devotion to Him.

Such, at least, as it seems to us, is the course to

be pursued; and if there is a sincere intention or desire to advance the kingdom of Christ, and a single eye to His glory, the issue may be left with God, though there should be error in the method. Our endeavour then shall be, if not directly "to prove the Christian religion against notorious infidels" who are clearly out of reach, at least "by manifestation of the truth to commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

LECTURE II

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

GAL. i. 11, 12

"I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

AS far as we have gone hitherto in our inquiry there seems to be no reasonable cause for doubting the truth of St. Paul's early history, which shows him to have been a zealous Jew, and a vigorous persecutor of the Christians. Up to this point the record of his life bears no direct testimony to Christ. But we come now to the consideration of an epoch in his history, which was, in fact, the turning-point of his whole life, and which is commonly known as his conversion.

What is the meaning of that conversion? How is it to be explained? What points in it are exceptional? What elements are common to the history of conversions generally? and what is the direct bearing of St. Paul's conversion upon the truth of the Gospel story? These are the ques-

tions which now demand our attention. We have to estimate the value of this conversion, supposing the truth of it to be established, as evidence for the faith of Christ.

We may well believe that, humanly speaking, the fate of the early Church would have been very different had Saul of Tarsus remained a Jew. For remaining a Jew he would have remained also a persecutor; the actual suffering, therefore, and detriment inflicted upon the Church, would have been great. She would have been driven yet sooner from all the coasts of Israel by persecution unto strange cities. But far more than this, how great and irreparable would have been the loss to the Church, not only of the first age, but of all ages, had she never possessed the Epistles of St. Paul! This would have been a calamity which it is simply impossible to calculate. But why is it incalculable, if not because the life and writings of this Apostle bear in themselves so distinct a witness to Christ. The magnitude, therefore, of the loss which the Church of Christ would have sustained had St. Paul remained a Jew is the measure of the positive advantage arising from his history as we have it. There is a mass of moral evidence accruing to the faith of Christ from the life of such a character, falling as it did at so critical a period of the Church's history. We proceed, then, to consider his conversion in detail.

Now the first point which demands our atten-

tion is the fact that we have different accounts of it. To doubt St. Paul's conversion is impossible. One[1], who may well claim to be an impartial critic in all matters advantageous to Christianity, has admitted that "there is no fact in history more certain or undisputed than" the conversion of St. Paul. As we have seen, there is undoubted evidence of his early resistance to the Gospel, while, if we accept even one of his Epistles as genuine, that alone affords equally conclusive evidence to some change having passed upon him. The question therefore arises, What were the circumstances of this change? How far can it be explained from natural causes? How far does it exceed the limits of the possibility of any such explanation? For the circumstances we must turn exclusively to the Acts, because the few allusions in the Epistles, if they *are* allusions, are not of a kind to be serviceable to us here. In the Acts, then, we have three separate accounts; one from the historian, and two from recorded speeches of St. Paul himself. In these accounts there are sundry minute differences which it is very important to observe, because it has been asserted that "we cannot argue from" their "minute details;" whereas, these differences, if properly noted, serve to confirm the coherence, and to establish the consistency of the narrative.

To take the historian's account first. We are

[1] Jowett, Epistles, &c., i. 227.

told that "as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" and afterwards, that "the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man." On turning next to St. Paul's first account, we find the additional circumstances, "they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me." Now here there is nothing contradictory, but rather the one narrative supplements and confirms the other. Had the voice been heard by no one but by Paul, the world would have called it an imaginary voice, but he tells us himself that others heard it besides him. Shall we, then, believe or disbelieve it? On the other hand, as this voice concerned Paul only, as it was addressed to him only, there is nothing improbable in the fact that he alone understood it. They did not hear the voice of *Him* that spake to *him;* for though they heard *a* voice, they saw no man speaking with that voice, whereby they might interpret it. Thus far, then, all is clear.

We turn now to St. Paul's second narrative in the twenty-sixth chapter of the Acts, before Festus and Agrippa, in which he says, "At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me

and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me." Here there are two points of difference. First, the light is said to surround them all, whereas St. Luke says it shined round about him, and St. Paul before had said, "there shone from heaven a great light round about me." As, however, he there says that the men who were with him saw the light, this is not a real discrepance, while St. Luke, in saying that the light shone round about him, does not deny that others saw it besides him, but merely omits to say so, not being concerned with what they saw.

There is, however, a more apparent divergence in the historian's asserting that the men stood speechless, and St. Paul's saying that they all fell to the earth. But each is no doubt speaking of a different order of time. St. Paul supplements the narrative of St. Luke; he speaks of the first effect, which was that the whole party were smitten to the ground; and Paul doubtless was the last to rise; but the others having risen, as they naturally would do after the first shock, remained standing speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. There is still, therefore, nothing really discrepant. One consistent narrative is readily obtained from the three accounts, more complete in its details than any one of them would be alone [2].

[2] I have here adopted the method which has been followed with so much success by my friend the Rev. W. Pound, in his

Nor is the other circumstance, that in his speech before Agrippa St. Paul represents our Lord as speaking to him at greater length than he himself or St. Luke has done before, a matter of any consequence. For, besides there being no improbability in the statement that our Lord spoke at greater length, the narrative of St. Luke is consistent with it, inasmuch as, after he has recorded the heavenly words, he still says, "the men stood speechless, hearing a voice[3]," as though that voice continued speaking, though the words of it are not recorded.

And, surely, it is most natural to suppose that after having arrested the course of the persecutor, and stricken him to the earth, and made him blind, the Lord would not leave him to himself in the rest of that dark and lonely journey to Damascus. He would be likely to reveal to him the nature of the calling wherewith He had called him; and certainly no one is more likely than Paul himself to have known or understood the nature of the communications he then received. We conclude, therefore, that the narratives are not contradictory, but are circumstantially consistent, and therefore credible.

recently published "Story of the Gospels." (Rivingtons.) He has, without doubt, in numerous instances, thrown a flood of light upon the four Evangelists, by combining their several narratives in one. See e.g. the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Denial of Peter, &c.

[3] ἀκούοντες, Acts ix. 7.

We must next inquire how they are to be understood? Was the occurrence, however it is to be explained, a natural or a supernatural one? Is the narrative a distorted version of a thunderstorm, or an earthquake, or an epileptic fit? Or is it, as it stands, a simple narrative of actual fact; and if so, what is the conclusion to which it points? Now in answering these questions, we must bear in mind that the three narratives all suggest the same answer; they vary slightly in detail, but not at all in character. The evidence of the three as to the nature of the occurrence is identical, when analysed. According to all, the facts were attested not by one witness, but by many. The whole party saw the light. They all heard a sound. They all, for a moment, fell to the earth. They all became speechless, unless indeed we except St. Paul. They all knew that the greatest sufferer by the occurrence was St. Paul himself, for they "led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus."

Thus far there is nothing contradictory in the evidence. It is consistent and unvarying. Nor is there more agreement in what it relates than in what is omitted. There is no hint any where given that the principal circumstances of the occurrence were purely natural. There is no mention of any earthquake; and it is altogether gratuitous to assume that a writer so simple as this historian should have meant a thunderstorm or flash of

lightning by the "great light from heaven[4];" while, on the other hand, the supposition of a fit, of which the Apostle alone was the subject, is not sufficient to account for the effect which was evidently produced on all the rest.

Again, we must bear in mind that the known character of St. Paul, before and after this event, points us necessarily to some adequate cause of change. His Epistles are a witness to his Christianity; and he is known to have been at one time a strict Jew. What, then, was the circumstance in his life by which he passed from the one condition to the other? Was it gradual or sudden? Was it such as this, the particulars of which have been recorded; or was it something else, of which we know absolutely nothing? It seems to be antecedently, and on the surface of things, reasonable to suppose that the event related may have been the cause. The evidence in favour of this supposition is consistent and convincing. If, however,

[4] Baur's explanation is as follows: "Das plötzlich am hellen Mittag mit ungewöhnlicher, selbst den Glanz der Sonne übertreffender Klarheit herableuchtende, den Apostel und seine Begleiter umstrahlende Licht ist daher nichts anders, als der symbolisch-mythische Ausdruck der Gewiszheit der wirklichen und unmittelbaren Gegenwart des zur himmlischen Würde verklärten Jesus." (Paulus, 68.) The only objection to this is the extreme improbability of a writer, even in the second century, resorting to the expedient of expressing such an idea in such language, translating his thoughts for the sole purpose of having them retranslated before they could be understood.

the Apostle's conversion took place on this occasion, and was due to these circumstances, that fact again is inconsistent with the belief that the circumstances were of a natural character. It was not the first thunderstorm to which he had been exposed, nor possibly even the first earthquake; and he would seem to have been a man of considerable nerve, judging from what we are told of his conduct during the shipwreck in the Mediterranean, when he appears to have been almost the only one of the company who was calm and self-possessed, so that it is improbable that any natural convulsion of this kind would have produced on him the effect recorded; while it is no less unlikely that a fit of epilepsy, catalepsy [5], or any thing else would have been followed by a total change of mind and revulsion of feeling; in short, would have made him a Christian from being a Jew.

It becomes, therefore, I think, very clear, first, that there is some truth in the record; and, secondly, that whatever truth there is must be held to be inconsistent with the idea that the circumstances of the story point only to a natural occurrence, or a physical phenomenon of some kind. There would be nothing in this adequate

[5] It may be further observed, that on the supposition of the Acts being written by Luke, the beloved *physician*, the idea of resolving St. Paul's conversion into an attack of this kind is rendered yet more improbable from the fact of his necessary acquaintance with the phenomena of such cases.

to bringing about the result which, it is manifest, was brought about, and nothing in this which really satisfies the necessary requirements of the narrative. There must have been another element in the occurrence, which is, indeed, directly indicated by the story, but which men weary themselves to get rid of, and are determined to shut their eyes to, and that element is the supernatural. (I use this word with very great reluctance, but I use it because there is no other word which will convey my meaning.) We have clear evidence that other persons besides the future Apostle saw the light, felt the shock, heard a sound, were terrified, and struck dumb. This could not have been without a cause; but the only cause likely to suggest itself is implicitly denied, and, indeed, no trace of it is discoverable in the record, but another cause is directly assigned, which would, indeed, be adequate to produce the results which actually did ensue, while the other supposed natural causes would be quite insufficient to do so. The only inference, therefore, can be that there were some, we will say for the present, unexplained circumstances arising from an unknown cause, and that to the principal person concerned these circumstances took the form of a voice from Heaven, from the unseen spiritual world; which directly reproved him for his past and present conduct, and from that instant changed conspicuously the whole course

and current of his life. Is not the only reasonable and fair conclusion, then, that he may have been, and probably was, right? that whereas all were witnesses that he was the subject of some strange thing which happened to him, he was the most likely to know what that thing was? That if any voice (being heard, indeed, unintelligibly by others) was addressed specially and exclusively to him, he was more likely than any one else to know what that voice had said, nay, that he alone was likely to know? And from the very fact that what he thought it said was altogether contrary to any thing his imagination, according to the antecedents of his history, was likely to invent, may we not conclude that what he thought it said was actually what it did say?

Having thus advanced so far towards showing that there is an absence of all direct evidence to prove the narrative of Saul's conversion untrustworthy, let us for the while assume it to be credible, and go a step farther by investigating the positive traces of credibility which it may possess, which consequently tend to confirm the assumption that we have already found to be not altogether unreasonable.

Observe, then, the fitness in point of time at which the conversion, or the events connected with it, took place. We know that persecution had by this time driven the great bulk of the Christian body out of Jerusalem. The zeal of

Saul, untempered by discretion, had "scattered" all the Church "abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the Apostles." It is clear, therefore, that Saul, as indeed we might expect, was very strong at Jerusalem. Doubtless his position in society, as well as his great energy and vigour, made him an important personage among his own nation at Jerusalem. On the other hand, it is also plain that there were many Christians at Damascus, and that Saul was not so well known there, for he was the bearer of the high priest's letters to the synagogues. We see, then, that he was a comparative stranger. At Jerusalem he was among his friends and familiars, at Damascus he would be in the position of a visitor and a guest. We have reason, therefore, to adore the wisdom of the Lord's providence in allowing Saul to go so far on his way as in fact to draw nigh unto Damascus. Herein was illustrated the truth of the homely maxim which says that "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." To all human judgment the hour of the Christians' doom was fast approaching. But yet a little while and the persecutor, armed with the highest official authority, would be "haling men and women" throughout the streets and lanes of Damascus, and "committing them to prison." If his arrival was expected, they must have begun already to prepare for death. They must have stood perplexed at the mysterious dealings of the Almighty,

who seemed to have given over His Church to the will of His adversaries. And yet from the moment that Saul had passed through the northern or Damascus gate of Jerusalem deliverance had been prepared for them, for it was determined in the counsels of the Most High that he was not to enter Damascus a Jew. But the Lord was in no haste to accomplish His pleasure. Had Saul been arrested in the earlier stages of his journey, he would naturally have returned to Jerusalem. The Christians at Damascus would have been perhaps as safe, but it would have been very different in every way for Saul. He would have been thrown again into familiar scenes and among his wonted companions. No Christian influences could well have been brought to bear upon him, and certainly not without an additional complication of difficulties.

But as it was, though the trial of the Church at Damascus was intensified by suspense, yet the ultimate welfare of it was enhanced thereby. Saul was permitted to sever himself entirely from his friends at home, and as it seemed, to prosecute successfully his purpose till he drew near Damascus, where that purpose was to be accomplished. Then it was that the Divine will triumphed. The bright light from heaven blinded the eyes of the adversary, and smote his comrades to the earth. And then it was that, as the most obvious and feasible thing they could do, his com-

panions led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus, where he was surrounded with fresh faces, and new scenes, and new associations, all of which were more or less favourable for the development of the mighty change which had passed upon him. The letters to the synagogues he had brought with him were not delivered, and instead of the official associates he had expected to meet, he was left for three days in darkness and solitude, till one of those whom he knew not, but had come to persecute, was sent to him with the message of love in return for his mission of hate: "Brother Saul, receive thy sight[6]."

Again, we must not fail to observe that however improbable it might be that Saul, during the three days of retirement and self-scrutiny at Damascus, would question the reality of the voice that addressed him on the way, yet it was very important for him, and no less so for the Church at large, that a vision of which he was the only person cognisant should be confirmed to him and attested to others by a total stranger in

[6] Acts xxii. 13. Baur observes, "Die Bestimmung, die Ananias erhielt, hängt jedoch mit dem von ihm an Paulus verrichteten Wunder so eng zusammen, dasz wir erst von diesem Wunder aus auch die die Haupthandlung einleitenden Visionen richtig verstehen können." (Paulus, 70.) Surely the question must arise, After all, is this the way we were *meant* to understand them? Is this the "literal construction," or "the farthest from the letter," which we are told "is commonly the worst"? (Hooker, v. 59.)

Damascus, who could be supposed to know nothing about it. The words, therefore, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me," must have sounded like a reverberation of the former voice. The men who had journeyed with him knew nothing of that voice, except indeed its unintelligible sound, but an unknown brother who had not been present not only knew of it, but was able to explain its meaning. He said that the same person had sent him who had spoken to Saul. This naturally had the effect of corroborating to Saul his own impressions of the strange event. If on mature reflection he had been disposed to question his own fancied experience, the visit of Ananias must have tended to dispel any such misgivings, and to remove all such uncertainty. It was a real voice that had spoken to him, a real Person who had called him by his name, and that Person was none other than Jesus.

Nor was the visit of Ananias of less significance to the Church at large. For the formal admission of Saul into the Christian body must have been made by some one. It was known that he had been baptised. It was doubtless known who had baptised him. But under any circumstances he would not have been baptised without sufficient evidence of his change. It seems, moreover, that Saul did not seek baptism, as indeed he is not

likely to have done; but from his well-known character it is yet less likely that, without some very powerful inducement, Ananias would have sought him out. Nothing less than a command believed to be Divine would afford such an inducement; but as we cannot doubt that it was Ananias who baptised Saul, we are driven to believe that he was led to do so by the motive assigned; while, on the other hand, as the credentials which he bore were accepted by Saul, we can only suppose that we have, in the visions recorded, a just and accurate relation of the actual circumstances that occurred: that is, the vision of Ananias is to the Church a perpetual voucher for the truth of the vision to Saul, and so the two accounts confirm and establish each other. We have, indeed, in the men who journeyed with Saul, witnesses to the outward facts connected with his conversion; but we have in Ananias a witness to the inward facts connected with it, just those very facts which his fellow-travellers could not witness to, which indeed, but for the testimony of Ananias, the Church could have had no witness to, but the conscience and testimony of Saul himself.

It would seem, then, if the view we have taken is a right one, that throughout the whole of this history there are so many manifest and palpable facts which all admit, that if we only allow to these their due weight we are brought inevitably to the conclusion that they were accompanied

with certain remarkable and extraordinary circumstances, which indicate a supernatural origin and point us to the outward and designed expression of a Divine will. It is impossible to account for the natural and obvious facts, without assuming the existence of other elements which can only be recognised as altogether supernatural.

For example, Saul is known to have suddenly become a Christian in the midst of a journey to Damascus, of which the sole object was vehement persecution of the Church. This change was accompanied with, and apparently caused by, some remarkable and unexplained circumstances which, if merely natural, are not sufficient to account for it. He is also known to have been received into the Church by Ananias, shortly after his arrival at Damascus, whither he had come as a bitter adversary; and while it is certain that Ananias is not likely to have sought out Saul, it is also clear that Saul did not apply to Ananias for admission to the Church.

Now, admitting all this, which most persons do not question, there is still something which is wanted to explain these circumstances. The facts related would thoroughly explain them; if these facts are rejected, it is incumbent upon us to find other facts which would be equally successful in explaining them; or else, to be consistent, we must also reject those ordinary details (which upon this hypothesis we do not)

which require to be explained. This is a simple and common sense way of putting the real issue, which I think can hardly fail to commend itself to all minds of ordinary fairness. And the result is an increased conviction that the history as it stands is strictly true, and that somehow or other we must face those circumstances which are an integral and inseparable portion of it.

But here the question will arise in many minds, "What need is there for these supernatural circumstances? They cumber and perplex the narrative, instead of simplifying it. They suggest many objections to the virtual truth of it which are difficult to remove. St. Paul himself, except in the history of the Acts, which is, of course, written by some one else, never alludes to them, but rather speaks of the great epoch of his conversion, as he does in the Epistle to the Galatians, as an inward 'revelation of Jesus Christ.' Is it not possible to retain this, while we reject the former? We protest emphatically against the notion that 'revelation' comes 'by our external senses[7].'"

Now we do not for one moment suppose that revelation comes *only* by our external senses; on the contrary, unless the revelation reaches the spirit of man it is no revelation at all. It is only through the spirit that man can receive spiritual illumination. If his spirit remains darkened, it

[7] Dr. Rowland Williams, "The Hebrew Prophets," i. 92.

matters not what light reaches his mind or flashes on his eyesight. But then it would seem that in this case there was, most manifestly, spiritual illumination, for Saul heard words addressed to him which were an unmeaning, unintelligible sound or voice to all about him. This, however, is not the real point at issue; for the question is, whether God can make or has made a revelation to the *whole* man, body, soul, and spirit; so that while He speaks directly to his spirit, his reason also may be convinced, and his bodily senses even assured, that it is a Divine voice that speaks to him? And this, I apprehend, is the whole question at issue between those who contend for an external revelation and those who hold such an idea of revelation as is limited to the spiritual perception in an ordinary way of certain spiritual truths. We do not deny that revelation may be independent of all contact with the senses; but the question is whether the senses have at any time been used as a medium for the revelation, whether it has come through the senses as through a channel; or, not coming strictly *through* them, whether they have been made simultaneously conscious of the revelation which has at such a time reached the spirit.

Now, if this be so, there must be such a modification of merely natural laws as will suffice to produce this consciousness. The same result might indeed be brought about by a mere con-

juncture of circumstances in themselves so unlikely and remarkable as, *for that cause*, to arrest attention, or it may be produced by circumstances so exceptional and peculiar that they can only be recognised by the ordinary mind as modifications of known physical laws.

For example, if a number of persons were to agree that at midday they saw a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun shining suddenly round about them, and that it was accompanied with a strange sound that might indeed resemble either a peal of thunder, or else an unintelligible human voice; if they saw that one of their number was more especially affected by the light and the sound, not indeed so as to lose his senses, which there was no evidence of his having done, but so as to have his religious convictions, not either strengthened or deepened, but entirely changed and altered, in consequence of what the voice had said to him; Would not any ordinary person necessarily conclude that the light and the sound which they all agreed in having seen and heard were actually the channels of the communication made to him?—that whereas, upon the evidence, there was no natural cause or circumstance to which they could be attributed, but an actual circumstance, in fact, of which they might be the concomitants, they remained therefore, and must remain, without explanation, unless it was admitted they were thus explained?

For on the hypothesis the internal revelation is not now denied, and on the evidence it was accompanied by certain physical phenomena which are not to be accounted for physically; must we not conclude, therefore, that the two combined to form one whole, and that 'revelation' did come on this occasion, at least, in part through 'the external senses'?

However acutely we may reason about it, there is obviously but one conclusion at which the *common sense* of mankind could arrive. It might be possible to call in question the recorded circumstances, but granting the general accuracy of these, which is in fact commonly granted, there is but one interpretation which persons of ordinary intelligence would put upon them.

But if this interpretation is accepted, then we have here a well-attested instance of a voice from heaven bearing witness to the justice of certain claims—the claims, namely, of Jesus of Nazareth to the worship and allegiance of mankind; for if those claims were valid in the case of Saul of Tarsus, they were valid for all mankind. It follows, therefore, that if the words spoken were a reality (and unless they were we have no clue to explaining the whole after-history of St. Paul), the light from heaven and the sound which were seen and heard by all were truly supernatural; or, to say the least, the occurrence of them at that moment, and in that conjuncture, even if accounted

for naturally, was itself supernatural, because expressive of the testimony of the works of God in nature to the utterance of the voice of God spoken to the conscience. It is, therefore, only casting dust in our eyes to disparage the evidence for any thing externally supernatural here under the pretext of enhancing the importance of the internal revelation, because, if we do sincerely concede the one, we cannot in fairness deny the other. The two elements of the narrative must stand or fall together. If we admit the outward circumstances to have been above and beyond nature, we must admit the voice that spoke to Saul to have been the voice of Jesus—the voice of God; but if we allow that he was at that moment the subject of an inward revelation, which was, in truth, Divine, then we cannot, upon the evidence, deny that it was accompanied with other and external phenomena which were in their occurrence *then*, even if not in their actual character, in the truest and most real sense, supernatural. God used the powers of nature and the sphere of the senses to seal and confirm the truth of the voice with which He spoke from heaven to the conscience of the stricken and prostrate Saul. And for once it would seem that 'revelation' was 'by' and with the knowledge of 'the external senses:' the whole man was made conscious that he was but as clay in the hands of the potter, and that which spoke with such power

to his soul, was confirmed by the unmistakable emphasis with which it spoke also to his bodily senses.

The argument, then, may be stated thus. Few, if any, persons will deny, upon considering the circumstances of St. Paul's conversion, that 'there was something in it.' They may seek to reduce that 'something' to the lowest possible quantity, but it is impossible to abolish it altogether. And in proportion as it is thus reduced, the existing phenomena of his known Epistles must be disregarded; his own evidence must be set aside, his judgment called in question, his value as a writer depreciated—all this is attended with difficulty: and the more the difficulty of it is acknowledged, the deeper will be the conviction that the story of his conversion had 'something in it.'

Now what was that 'something'? It was clearly not less than the element of the supernatural, the inexplicable, that accompanies the true conversion of each ordinary Christian. There have been few disciples of Christ greater than Paul. But we hold that no man becomes, in spirit and in truth, a disciple of the Lord Jesus, without the distinct and direct operation of a Power which defies all the ingenuity of science, analysis, and observation to account for it. For "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is

every one that is born of the Spirit[8]." It is nothing less than the Spirit and the power of the Omnipotent which transforms into the image of Christ the soul which has hitherto borne only the image of the earthly. It is in defiance of all the wisdom of the world, and in independence of all the maxims of science and the revelations of the physical and the natural, that this change takes place. You cannot account for it; you cannot explain it; you cannot define its laws. They are not the laws of lunacy, nor of eccentricity, nor of any other observed and registered peculiarity of any kind. The lives of a John Bunyan, a Richard Baxter, or a Henry Martyn, are a standing miracle. They are inexplicable, except upon one hypothesis. And the death-bed of every Christian, now-a-days, is a miracle likewise. It defies the scrutiny of science to explain it. Except upon one hypothesis, it is not to be explained. But while these miracles exist and confront us daily, we cannot question the miracle which we find in at least a part of St. Paul's conversion—the part, namely, to which his writings testify. For the miracle which our own eyes behold, or have beheld, is but part only of the miracle which is in them. They are the record and the proof of a more gigantic miracle of grace than any which has since been wrought. But how can we, with the evidence of

[8] St. John iii. 8.

this miracle before us, question the possibility of another miracle, wrought indeed in another sphere, but wrought simultaneously with this, and resting upon evidence no less unimpeachable? For whether or not, in being caught up into Paradise, the Apostle refers to his conversion, certain it is that he speaks of an event no less independent than that was of the ordinary laws of human existence. On his own showing, therefore, we have in his history to deal with circumstances that refuse to be reckoned in the number of the common and the natural, which can only, therefore, in fairness be regarded as supernatural. At least it is not consistent, while admitting the reality of these, to deny the abstract possibility of others, different indeed in kind, but not different in the degree of their inherent possibility.

Assuming, then, as it would seem there is every reason for assuming, the actual truth of the narrative of St. Paul's conversion, as it stands, in what it suggests no less than in what it asserts, let me ask you to consider the direct bearing of it on the truth of the Gospel story. And in order to determine this, we have but to bear in mind the two voices, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest," and "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" The precise accuracy of these words matters not; even if they were only imaginary, they truly represent the whole after-character of St. Paul; but, as we have seen, we may deal with them as literally

and exactly true; and then it becomes impossible to escape from the conclusion that the persecuted Jesus was alive and present; and that not in a parable or figure, not in the persons of the disciples, for they were none of them there, but in the reality of His own Person. The Man who had been crucified was then speaking to Saul, and Saul knew that he was speaking to Him. He knew there could be no imposture, no collusion, no mistake. The very Name he had execrated was now pronounced from heaven; the cause he had persecuted was now recognised in heaven; he confessed that the Galilæan, whom he had resisted unto blood, was now victorious. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" "Who art Thou, Lord?" "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." There is no denying it: the words ring in our ears now, after eighteen centuries of the world's turmoil. Whatever else is false, they at least are true. Rebel against the truth of them as much as you will, shut your eyes to the evidence of them as you may, call the whole story a delusion, brand it as the baseless fabric of a vision, explain it away in all its details, strip it of the supernatural, resolve it into a flash of lightning, an earthquake, a stroke of epilepsy, or what you will, but after all there is a depth in it you have not fathomed, there is a truth in it you have not recognised, a mass of abiding testimony to Christ that will speak and make itself

heard, ay, and will be accepted also by the generations of a remote posterity,

"To the last syllable of recorded time."

It would be easy, then, to show how there is implied in this voice, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest," an acknowledgment as a fact of the resurrection and ascension. The despised Peasant, whose disciples had now filled Jerusalem with His doctrine, was met with in the journey to Damascus. He was not dead: He was able to vindicate His own cause, to assert His power over the elements, to smite a party of horsemen to the earth, to render them speechless; to strike one of them blind. Was all this a thing to be done by the mere spirit of a dead Man's teaching? by a very vivid presentment to the mind of His former existence? or a sudden perception of the truth and genius of His doctrine? No! we cannot believe it, and most emphatically do we say we cannot. If the heart of the headstrong persecutor was turned to Jesus, then the Will of Jesus was supreme; and if it was turned to Him, in this way, then He took heaven and earth to record, and made them bear witness, that He was their Sovereign too; Lord, not only of the hearts and consciences of men, but of the might and power of the elements also, which fulfilled His pleasure. And whether is greater, to bend the stubborn will of the proud heart, and to make the haughty spirit

bow, or to speak by a Voice from heaven, to eclipse the brightness of the Eastern sun at noonday, and bring to the ground the physical strength of powerful men? Assuredly, He who after His death, without human agency, did the one, as we know He did, could likewise do the other. It is capable of a *reductio ad absurdum* to suppose it otherwise.

And, lastly, from this time forward, the life of the persecutor flowed in another channel: his will was conscious of another influence; it obeyed another law. "What shall I do? Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" He surrendered himself in the whole man, in the completeness of his humanity, body, soul, and spirit, to a new Master, to the Master whom he had wronged, whose disciples he had persecuted. He gave himself up to Him as His servant and slave, henceforth determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. But a self-surrender so absolute, so permanent, and so unfaltering, as his life and writings show it to have been, is intelligible only upon one supposition. He learnt to behold in Jesus Christ the revelation of the Will of the God of his fathers; he never renounced his allegiance to the God of his fathers; he learnt to know Him better, and to see Him more clearly, in and through the Person of Jesus. He was the perfectly transparent and pellucid medium through which the brightness of the Divine glory streamed

upon his believing soul. In seeing Him, he saw the Father. Had he not done so, had there been any thin gauze of substantial difference between the Object and the Medium, his self-devotion to Jesus would have been not only inexplicable, but even impious. He would have broken faith, not only with the obligations of the ceremonial law, but with the divinity of the moral law, which proclaimed, with an inviolable authority and an unalterable significance, "Thou shalt have none other gods but Me." But seeing in the once-persecuted Jesus the revelation (it is a Divine word, for God alone is revealed, or can reveal) of the living God, and through the revelation of Jesus, the greater glory of the Almighty and Eternal Father, he could say to the Galatians, in terms of no equivocal or ambiguous meaning, "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after *man*. For I neither received it of *man*, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

LECTURE III

THE FAITH OF ST. PAUL

Acts xiii. 38, 39

"*Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*"

HAVING thus far reviewed the ground upon which we accept the ordinary belief about the early history of the Apostle Paul, and the narrative of his conversion, we will endeavour now to estimate the kind of evidence to Christ which is borne by his acknowledged writings, even though reducing them, for the sake of argument, to the smallest possible number.

It is very commonly supposed that if certain texts and portions are abstracted from Scripture and shown to be doubtful or spurious, a fatal blow is struck at the religion of Christians. Nothing is really more false if the matter is rightly apprehended [1].

[1] Professor Jowett observes, Epistles, &c., i. 352, "It is often supposed that, if the evidence of the genuineness of a

Imagine it to be a fact that a certain passage or book is not genuine, that it is an unauthorised addition by a later hand, it will at once be seen that no possible harm is done to the cause of Christ by the separation of the false from the true. According as we believe the justice of His own declaration, "I am the truth," we shall be persuaded of the impolicy, no less than the iniquity, of a pious fraud, and shall question the expediency of trying to establish the true with the aid and addition of the false. We shall, on the contrary, be quite certain that the true can stand best alone, and be the stronger and more invincible.

single book of Scripture be weakened, or the credit of a single chapter shaken, a deep and irreparable injury is inflicted on Christian truth. It may afford a rest to the mind to consider that, if but one discourse of Christ, one Epistle of Paul, had come down to us, still more than half would have been preserved. Coleridge has remarked that out of a single play of Shakespeare the whole of English literature might be restored. Much more true is it that, in short portions or single verses of Scripture the whole spirit of Christianity is contained." This may be very true; but is it the whole truth? What if every vestige of Scripture which spoke of the death or resurrection of the Lord Jesus were lost? Would that which is somewhat vaguely called "the spirit of Christianity" survive? Can that "spirit" exist apart from a living and revealed Head, by whom it was promised, and from whom alone it proceeds? "The whole spirit of Christianity" may be said to be contained in the Parable of the Sower; but who could recover or extract it from that Parable if no other discourses of our Lord, or no other portions of Scripture remained? Surely there is that in Holy Writ, which being lost or denied, all is denied or lost.

And though there is a manifest danger here, as elsewhere, lest in rooting up the tares we root up also the wheat with them, it may be advantageous for many believers, no less than profitable for some who are wholly or in part unbelievers, to show that when the adversary, or the indifferent and lukewarm critic, has done the worst that he can do with the volume of sacred Scripture, it still rests on a foundation which is beyond his reach, as regards the *substance* of the faith which it reveals to man. It is not because we have doubts ourselves, but because we would deal truly and faithfully with those who have, that we adopt this course. We desire to wrestle with the adversary on his own ground, and to do battle with his own weapons, declining for the time the use of manifold resources upon which we might justly draw; striving to prove that when the least possible is left to us, there is even then sufficient for our need. While, therefore, in one sense allowing that it is unfair to represent the cause for Christ as one in which we must accept 'all or nothing,' we shall endeavour to show that there is one most just and necessary sense in which, unless we do accept Christ for 'all,' we virtually accept Him for 'nothing,' and in vain.

My object, then, will be to show the unsatisfactory character and position of half-belief—that it is inconsistent with itself and illogical; and to show this by proving from the evidence of St.

Paul's writings, when most reduced, that he was no half-believer. And in the attempt to do so I shall endeavour likewise, as far as possible, to avoid identification with any one sect or party in the Church of Christ; seeking rather to present the truth in such a manner that every Christ-illumined conscience may respond to it; and to this end shall eschew to the utmost the use of theological terms, if so be, by the grace of God, I may win to Christ the common wayfarer in the world's thoroughfares by submitting to him common arguments clothed in common language.

I assume, then, for the present, that the words which have been read from the Acts of the Apostles are rightly ascribed to St. Paul[2]. They are said to have been part of his sermon at Antioch in Pisidia, and we have no reason to doubt it; but whether or not he really used them, every one must allow that they fall in with the tenor of all his teaching[3]. The early chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, the whole of the Epistle to the Galatians, are but an expansion of the same statement: they may, therefore, fitly be selected as a sample of his doctrine. Whether or not he actually used them, which *we* do not

[2] See Appendix.

[3] Recent criticism has indeed asserted the contrary; but the difference is imaginary rather than real. Who would suppose that these words implied a power in the Law to justify from *some* things, and not absolutely that Christ justified from *all*? See Davidson's Introduction to N. T., 1868, vol. ii. p. 230.

question, they are manifestly words which he might have used. What, then, is the plain and natural meaning conveyed by them?

If we were to search all Scripture through, we could not find any words better calculated to exhibit the reality of the conversion we have been considering than these are. They contain a direct and explicit denial of all the sentiments he had most fondly cherished. They set forth the Man whom he had perhaps spent months, or even years, in persecuting as the one channel of forgiveness and the one ordained means of righteousness before God. They are full of the ardent zeal and the irrepressible enthusiasm of a new convert, who, not content with advancing the truth he has embraced, will expose also the error he has renounced which once enthralled him; who will destroy in order that he may build. There can be no doubt that the man who spoke these words, or words like them, had renounced all dependence on the Mosaic Law. He was no longer a Jew as opposed to a Christian, however much of Judaism his Christianity had imbibed. He may have believed, indeed, in the Divine mission of Moses, but he did not believe in the worth of reliance on Mosaic institutions, and compliance with Mosaic ordinances, as a means to righteousness.

Here, then, was evidence of a great change. But of what was the change itself an evidence?

Had he changed for the better or for the worse? Was he right or wrong in his changed condition? We desire to urge very strongly the fact that he was one or the other. He could not be both, and he could not be neither the one nor the other because partly right and partly wrong. Many doubtless would have said, at least we know they would have said now, that he was wrong to draw the broad distinction; that a wiser and more enlightened spirit than his would have discovered common ground on which both positions could be justified and both convictions meet. But without insisting for the moment that St. Paul was right in his decision, there can be no question whatever, as to what that decision was. He was persuaded that the two positions were wholly and entirely at variance, that they were hopelessly irreconcilable[4].

And no careful observer can for a moment suppose that his antagonism to his former Mosaic belief arose in any degree from a failure to appre-

[4] Even modern criticism takes delight in dwelling upon, if not in magnifying, St. Paul's antagonism to his early faith. But the more *this* is noticed, the more remarkable does his conversion become, and the more probable the fact that it was attended with extraordinary circumstances. A striking indication of the total revolution which thought has undergone in these matters during the last hundred years is manifest in this, that whereas, before, Paley found an armoury of defence in the coincidences between the Acts and the Epistles, the followers of Baur ground their attacks upon the credibility of the Acts, on the discrepances between them and the Epistles.

ciate or understand it. His eager antipathy did not arise from the want of intelligent sympathy. The reverse was the truth. He knew, so to say, the ins and outs of Mosaic belief, its strength as well as its weakness; he was a judge biassed in its favour, for he had himself been an attached disciple and a strenuous supporter of it. But knowing all that he knew, and feeling as he felt, he now saw that it was essentially and radically wrong as an *end* in itself. That it fell short of the purpose for which he had believed it was sufficient, that it missed the mark he had thought it hit.

And it is to be observed that this was not because he depreciated or disparaged the Mosaic Law, but because he exalted it. "Do we then make void the Law through Faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Law[5]." No man thought more highly than he did of the truth and importance of the Mosaic writings, and the Mosaic history; or of the origin and authority of the Mosaic Law, both of which he believed to be Divine. But he had learnt now that the Law of Moses could not make righteous; could not purify the heart, nor cleanse the conscience; and he knew that, when most devoted to it, his heart and conscience had been uncleansed: he also *felt* now, as a matter of personal experience, that they were cleansed. He was not narrower in sympathy

[5] Rom. iii. 31.

than he was before, but wider and broader. He was not poorer in experience, but vastly richer. He was not shallower in knowledge, but deeper and more profound.

He was like a man ascending a mountain; when at a certain elevation, he has a certain command of the surrounding country, but the higher he rises, the farther he sees; he does not grasp less of the landscape, but more; he does not lose what he has before seen, but he retains it, and sees more; nay, he sees, even with respect to *that*, what he did not see before—its relation to other and neighbouring points, how it lies, and what its position is with reference to the surrounding landscape. It is not a matter of opinion which view is the more correct, it is simply a matter of fact; he who will take the widest and most accurate survey will ascend the highest.

And every thing bears witness that it was so with Paul. He had before been zealous and energetic; he had ever been bold, enthusiastic, self-sacrificing, and self-forgetful. But the record of his earlier life lives only through the record of his later. It was in Christian "labours" that he was "more abundant[6]." It was as a Christian that he was "in prisons more frequent," and "in deaths oft." He had risen higher in the scale of experience when he became a Christian; he had climbed to higher elevations in humanity, as a

[6] 2 Cor. xi. 23.

follower of Christ. We are bound, therefore, to accept his testimony with regard to himself. The view that he commanded of his earlier life was truer and more accurate than it was before: he was right, therefore, and not wrong in his decision.

And this fact will become to us yet more manifest if we consider that as he was not ignorant of what he had renounced, so neither was he of what he had embraced. Of course it is open to us to reject St. Paul as an expounder of Christianity, as a preacher of Christ. We may fondly imagine that we can improve upon his Gospel; we may deny his authority and set aside his judgment; but unless we are willing to do this, unless we believe that he spoke here with the indiscreet zeal of a too eager convert, we cannot refuse to accept with deference his statement, that the two positions here contrasted are incompatible: they were so in his case, not accidentally but essentially, and they are so in all cases universally.

There can, therefore, be no compromise between them; and St. Paul was quite right in staking the whole weight, value, and authority of his Gospel on the assertion that there could not. He thoroughly understood the Law of Moses; he was not ignorant of the Faith of Christ; if there is one thing to which his writings bear witness more than to another, it is this, that he believed a compromise between the two to be absolutely fatal to

both; or, at least, that any alliance with the Law was absolutely destructive to the Faith of Christ. "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law; ye are fallen from grace[7]." He may have been wrong in his vehemence, at fault in his conclusion, indiscreet in his antagonism, but there is no doubt about the sincerity of it; and if he was wrong, then we are altogether at sea as to the respective merits of Christ and Moses—of the Law and Grace. We have rejected St. Paul's Gospel, and must cast about to invent another for ourselves, in defiance of the warning, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed[8]."

It would seem then, all things considered, that whatever may be the tendency of popular sentiment in the present day, however we may think that had we been in the days of St. Paul we would have endeavoured to effect a compromise between the antagonistic principles here contrasted, it would have been hopeless and impossible to do so. There was a point, in the judgment of the Apostle, and that a very definite and distinct one, at which the faith of Christ encountered a principle inherently and permanently at variance with it. This conviction, for evil or for good, was the distinctive mark of Pauline Christianity.

[7] Gal. v. 4. [8] Gal. i. 8.

Having seen, then, that according to St. Paul, there are certain principles which are essentially opposed, let us pass on to inquire what in his own case these principles must have been, and what the relation of them is now to us? In the first place, there was the observance of the Mosaic Law, which he had learnt to know was a useless bondage. It was useless, because it failed to accomplish one particular end, which he now valued more than all things. It could not justify. There is a certain flavour of theology attaching to this word, of which it is extremely difficult to divest it; but we must endeavour to do so. One thing at least is clear, that, whatever associations are connected with it now-a-days, it had a real and distinct meaning then; and exactly in proportion as the spiritual and moral nature of man is the same now that it ever was, we may be sure that this meaning is ascertainable now: it will be very intelligible, if we deal with the *thing* rather than the word.

The Apostle had found, then, that strict and minute compliance with the rites and ceremonies of a legal system failed to satisfy his nature. It did not set him right with himself, or right with his fellow-men, or right with God, his own conscience being witness. There was a felt want; a void which required to be filled, but which routine observances of whatever nature did not and could not fill. The fault did not appear to be in the

observances themselves, or in the rules laid down for them, but somewhere or other it was in him. Somehow or other *he* was wrong, and he felt it. Possibly the words spoken by Christ, "it is hard for thee to kick against the goads," may point to moments when this was experienced in times past. It would seem that in spite of all his activity and energy he had had misgivings in his mind. He may have tried to silence them, but they would speak. Even at the martyrdom of Stephen, for some reason or other, he did not take an active part, but was content to "keep the raiment of them that slew him." We may perhaps not be wrong in discerning traces of this uneasiness here; but there can be no doubt that it was not till afterwards that he felt to the full the inadequacy of the Law, the insufficiency of observing it, to satisfy the deeper yearnings of his nature. It was the felt experience of the Gospel of Christ which showed at once how deep these yearnings were, and that nothing else could satisfy them.

Nor is it at all difficult to perceive more precisely the special form which those yearnings took in the Apostle's mind: they were yearnings for deliverance from sin. The memorable words spoken at Antioch show this; but if *they* did not, the Epistle to the Romans would. He had suffered severely from the condemning power of sin. It had haunted him like a nightmare. He had felt

it like the presence of a corpse. "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He could not shake it off; and the routine of Mosaic enactments, instead of helping him to do so, only bound it faster and closer to him. There is clear and irresistible evidence of all this. We have not drawn upon the imagination or exaggerated the picture; his own confession is the witness; we cannot set it aside, if we would; but if we could, it is by no means the only witness of the kind. Multitudes besides St. Paul have felt and described the same conflict with sin in the conscience, so that it cannot in justice be regarded as an idiosyncrasy of his own, but must be dealt with as a fact of our common nature. And, though the conflict we speak of may have owed much of its fierceness to the writings of St. Paul, yet we must bear in mind that it by no means originates with them. The Psalms of David and the writings of the Prophets are equally conscious of the presence of sin as a disturbing power in the soul, not to mention that there are traces of the same thing in the literature of all nations and of all ages. It cannot, therefore, be right or wise to treat it as a delusion of the fancy, an error of the judgment.

Now, it is certain that no man ever passed through a sorer agony, in the struggle with sin, than St. Paul did. He was fully conversant with all its bearings; and he had also found that minute compliance with legal observances was powerless

to deal with it. The two forces, sin and the Law, moved along parallel lines in the same plane, and never met. The commandment exposed and detected sin with unerring certainty, but could not eradicate it. The Law condemned, but could not cast it out. The efforts of a sincere and earnest mind to keep pace with the requirements of the Law were always baffled by the presence of sin, which was persistent and all-pervading. The result was constantly recurring, and continually the same: "Ye cannot be justified by the Law of Moses. It is not able to give you that sense of inward righteousness, which you really crave after, and to which you have a right."

And, it is to be observed, that this inability, which was specially predicated of the Law of Moses, was neither confined to *his* Law, nor limited to the ceremonial portion of it. The same may be said of the application of all Law, as a means of setting the conscience right. It is a universal fact, of human experience, that he who strives to compete with precept is outstripped by precept; for he learns, by degrees, that precept is not merely a literal instrument, but a spiritual agent of unknown capabilities; and, therefore, if he leans on precept for support, it will go into his heart and pierce him. It is what the Apostle found it to be, a struggle between a carnal agent and a spiritual power. "The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin." To look to the fulfilment of

precept, whatever the precept may be, for the satisfaction of the yearnings of the soul, is either to be ignorant of the nature of those yearnings, or else to look in vain to have them satisfied.

But had the Apostle's experience carried him no farther than this, it would have been interesting and instructive as a subject of psychological study, although comparatively useless and unprofitable; but it was far otherwise. His constant and unvarying testimony was, "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified." Now, here, we have to observe, that his testimony was of value exactly in proportion to the depth of his former experience. It is not even a matter of importance whether that experience was morbid, or normal; we may perhaps go so far as to say that if it was morbid, yet then the merit of the counteracting principle was enhanced rather than diminished thereby. If his sense of sin was exceptionally deep, then there is all the more credit attaching to the power of that remedy, which was able not only to relieve but to heal it.

And yet the evidence on this point is not less abundant and conclusive than on the other. If there was one thing St. Paul was sure of, it was the sufficiency of the grace of Christ. The exuberance of the joy with which he hailed his deliverance from the body of sin and death, and his escape to the

possession of life and righteousness in Jesus Christ, is conspicuous and unmistakable: "Who shall deliver me? . . . . I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is absolutely and hopelessly impossible to set aside and to deny this. The writings are undisputed, the language is self-evident; it is not even doubtful or ambiguous, but transparently clear. He lived, and wrote, and travelled, and preached, and laboured, and suffered, and died, for no other end if not for this, to show men that through the name of Jesus Christ there was preached unto them the forgiveness of sins. All history, therefore, bears us witness that he had found in his own conscience a solution of that perplexing enigma which the struggle of sin and Law presented; that in his most profound personal experience the clamouring voice of the accuser was hushed for ever.

We may sum up, then, very briefly, this portion of our argument. As a matter of indubitable fact, which is beyond the insinuation of a doubt, St. Paul found deliverance from the condemnation and the restlessness of sin, through what he called belief in Jesus Christ. We will not stop now to inquire into the meaning of this. The statement at present is enough for our purpose. It was somehow through Jesus Christ that he found deliverance. Then who was this Jesus Christ? Was He the subject of St. Paul's invention? Was, first of all, his sense of sin imaginary, and then

his sense of deliverance, and then, finally, the Person from whom the deliverance was supposed to come? As far as I am aware, no one was ever rash enough to suggest that St. Paul invented the existence of the Person whose name he preached. But if he did not invent the existence of that Person, he must have adopted the invention of some one else, supposing Him to have been invented; and, if this was the case, then Paul spent his whole life in making known to mankind the name of a Person who was a pure invention; and in doing so, because, after he had for some time, possibly for years, found that obedience to legal observances gave him no inward peace, brought no relief to the gnawing sense of sin, he had at last discovered that this imaginary Person had entirely done so; had not only succeeded where the, as he believed, Divinely-appointed Mosaic Law had failed, but, in addition to this, had put him in possession of spiritual gifts and graces which, when he was most zealous of the Law, he had not even desired or conceived.

Given, then, the Apostle's sense of sin and sense of pardon—the pardon must have come through some one—he says it came through Jesus Christ, not merely through others, on condition of believing in Jesus Christ, but from Jesus Christ Himself. If, then, He was an invention, He was an invention capable of bestowing the sense of pardon, capable of giving relief to an aching con-

science, of strengthening and establishing a sin-stricken soul, like St. Paul's.

We pass by this for the time, and insist upon the fact that this Jesus Christ, to whom St. Paul became a convert, was certainly not *his* invention, but was in vogue then; he was *the* Jesus Christ commonly known among the Christian brethren; not a different Person, but the same; and Paul found in Him all he wanted; was content to sacrifice all for His sake, and spent his life in proclaiming the knowledge of Him, to the destruction of all his early hopes, and in defiance of all his early prejudices. This, then, as far as it goes, is a witness to the existence at that time of a power or influence which was commonly ascribed to Jesus Christ, which, for some reason or other, was associated with Him, and of which His Name was generally accepted as the symbol or exponent.

Now it is quite clear that St. Paul could not have invented this association of ideas, because there is abundant evidence that it was common to him with others, who were more or less independent of his teaching and influence. (He speaks, for example, of others being in Christ before him[9].) But it is scarcely less clear that the other bodies of Christians, who were in existence when he was known as Saul the persecutor, cannot have invented this association of ideas, or have

[9] Rom. xvi. 7.

invented the name and history of the Person to whom was ascribed the attribute of the forgiveness of sins; for the bare existence of such a Person was notorious to every one; the main features of His history were as familiar to Saul as they were to any one; it was a well-known fact that Jesus had lived and taught in Galilee and Judæa, and had died at Jerusalem. The question, *then*, was not a question of fact, but rather a question of doctrine, whether or not to this Person belonged the high prerogative of forgiving sin. And to this, the simple fact of Saul's own change of sentiment, from the rage of a persecutor to the zeal of a convert, was no slight or feeble testimony. Certain it is, that the change which we know to have taken place in him could not have taken place, if there had not been a solid and indestructible basis of fact underlying all that framework of doctrine to which Saul became a convert.

But neither again, on the other hand, is it possible that that basis of fact can have been very different from what it is still proclaimed to be, for the simple reason that unless it had been of a sufficient strength it could not have borne the superstructure that was reared upon it. For see what that superstructure was! Nothing less than a Divine prerogative, the forgiveness of sins, and a position in the scale of spiritual dignity far higher than that of Moses, are to be assigned to

this Person, whose history is allowed to be, to a certain extent, a matter of fact.

Now these are two points on which Saul the Pharisee must have held very definite opinions. "Who can forgive sins but God only?" is a question which he doubtless would have been the first to echo, and the traditional honour assigned to Moses was, as we know, the highest that could be ascribed to man. If, therefore, some basis of fact is allowed to the life of Jesus, and Paul was content to receive remission of sins through Jesus, and to place Him far higher than Moses, it is obvious that the facts connected with the life of Jesus must have been of a highly exceptional character. As a matter of fact we know that *crucifixion* was one of these facts, and that the cross of Christ was ever appealed to as Paul's greatest glory. But there was nothing in the cross itself to be an object of glory. As a symbol of shame and execration it could only become an object of glory from association with Him who died upon it. The cross itself, then, being an undisputed fact, becomes a witness to the glory of the Crucified, because it was proclaimed as a symbol of glory, and was despoiled by Him of its associations of shame. But the cross of Christ would still have been a symbol of shame and of scandalous defeat, had Jesus brought back with Him no pledge of victory through the cross; and, as a matter of fact, we know that this same St.

Paul declared not only that Jesus was "delivered for our offences," but also that He was "raised again for our justification [1]."

It would seem, then, according to this evidence, that the *Resurrection* likewise was one of those exceptional facts in the life of Christ which Saul, the persecutor, was persuaded he had sufficient ground for believing. That Jesus rose from the dead the third day, was part of the very brief creed that he has himself preserved. But if it was a fact that He was raised from the dead, and was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve, then of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part were yet alive when the first Epistle to the Corinthians was written, then of James, and then of all the Apostles, then,—one of two conclusions must necessarily follow,—either the Lord Jesus was still on earth mixing and conversing among men, or He must have been withdrawn to an elevation of glory from which He would again be looked for with longing by all Christian men who waited for His coming [2]. Now it is perfectly evident from the writings of St. Paul, which of these alternatives expressed *his* belief. Every line he ever wrote bore witness to his habitual consciousness of Christ above him, as the Author of all grace, and the supreme Dispenser of all power. He at least was "always confident, knowing that whilst he was at home in

[1] Rom. iv. 25.

[2] 1 Cor. iv. 5.

the body he was absent from the Lord." He for one "laboured" always, "that whether present or absent he might be accepted of Him," knowing that "we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ."

Here, then, at least, we find woven into the very thread and substance of St. Paul's undisputed writings, the essential framework and tissue of the Christian creed. We have his testimony given in a way in which it is not possible to accept his authority and reject *it*, to the life, the death, the resurrection, the ascension of, and the future judgment by, the Lord Jesus Christ. We see that St. Paul could not have dethroned Moses from his position of eminence and set up Jesus in his place; that he could not have professed himself willing to receive the forgiveness of sins through Jesus, and could not have proclaimed Jesus to others as the only channel of forgiveness, unless, first of all, Jesus had been a real person; and unless, secondly, the known circumstances of the life of Jesus had been such as to correspond with and to warrant this high estimate and these proud assumptions. That the human existence of Jesus was a reality is not to be questioned with the acknowledged evidence of St. Paul's writings before us.

But admitting the human life of Jesus as a reality, it is no less obvious from the virtue that St. Paul ascribed to Jesus, which was the

very essence and marrow of his teaching, that if there had not been exceptional features and elements in that life, it could not have sustained the weight of doctrine that was based upon it. In that remission of sins should be preached through a man who *merely* died as a malefactor,—that justification unto life should come through the dead, and the ministration of the Spirit through one who had himself seen corruption, and was even then mouldering in the tomb,—was an absolute impossibility, a sheer absurdity. If Jesus was in spiritual things what Paul consistently declared Him to be (and here we must bear in mind that those only are adequate judges who, like Paul, have tried and found Him so), then there is but one conclusion possible, that the dispensation of the Spirit was committed unto Him; that He was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead; that He was set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood; and that He of God was made sin for us, though He knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

But in order that we may see this the more clearly, let us, in conclusion, dwell at yet greater length upon the two points advanced by Paul at Antioch in connexion with his testimony to Christ. "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." It may sound a strange thing to say, but this "preaching" either is or is not a truth; that is, the forgiveness of sins either

comes through Christ, or it does not. If it does not come through Christ, then the claims advanced on behalf of Christ are fallacious, or Christ, as the means of forgiveness, the channel of pardon, is superfluous; that is, either some other person, and not Christ, is the channel of forgiveness, or else no channel is wanted, and God forgives sin independently of Christ, and without any reference to the mediation of Christ. Now it is perfectly evident that both of these alternatives are excluded by the statement of the text. The Apostle was reasoning with men who implicitly believed that the one revealed way of salvation was through the obedience of the Law of Moses. They thought they could fulfil the requirements of that Law, and by fulfilling them could lay hold of a valid hope towards God. They believed He would recognise the disciples of His own Lawgiver. No other system was brought into competition; but, if so, it would have been rejected, and its adherents anathematised.

To people, then, in this frame of mind, St. Paul declared the Law of Moses useless as a means of forgiveness. It is manifest that no Law, as law, can be the basis of hope; unless, instead of condemning, it acquits. If the Law has not been violated, then its operation is null and void; but in no case can its operation, if it operates, be other than one of death. It is equally manifest, that every human being falls under the operation

of Law somewhere; and with reference to no human being can the operation of the Law of God be absolutely null and void. All are responsible to God; none have discharged their responsibilities; therefore the operation of Law comes in as an agent of death; and, consequently, from the Law, as law, there can be no hope of life. From some other source, indeed, without reference to Law, hope may enter, but not on the basis of Law. In the case in point, however, this other source, upon the hypothesis, was excluded; the Law, then, being found useless as a means of pardon, these men of Antioch were left without hope if they rejected the one ground of hope now set before them. "Through this Man," but through this Man alone, "is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins."

Again, the operation of Law, as a guide of life, has reference solely to the present and the future; it has no effect upon the past, except, indeed, one of retrospective condemnation; while the same causes which prevented its fulfilment in the past, must, of course, operate in like manner for the future; there would remain, therefore, not only long arrears of sin uncancelled, but also a continually accumulating mass of sin with which a system of Law was wholly incompetent to deal, except as an agency of condemnation and death. Unless, therefore, the moral Law of God was made only to be broken, against which the unfaltering

voice of universal nature loudly protests, mankind are left without any ground of hope, if some appointed ground is not revealed. Saul of Tarsus, who had passed through all the agony of this debate, as an intense inward struggle, found in Christ what no one has ever found elsewhere, a complete discharge of guilt, a discharge extending not only to the past, but also to the continuous present; and embracing, therefore, prospectively, the future, because applying not merely to the *actions* of the man, but likewise to the *man* himself. This was the remission of sins which he not only himself found in Christ, but was able to proclaim also to others through Him.

Now there are two ways, and only two ways, in which this forgiveness or remission of sins, if a fact, could be established: one, by means of a direct revelation such as St. Paul laid claim to, and such as seems, at the first, to have been given him in his journey to Damascus; and the other, that inward consciousness of peace, healing, and rectitude, which would, doubtless, accompany it, if a fact, and which certainly, being of a moral nature, could not be produced by any thing itself out of harmony with the moral nature of man, and contrary to the moral and spiritual constitution bestowed upon him by God. In other words, if this forgiveness of sins, when believed, had the effect of what is technically called justifying, that is, of setting a man right with reference to him-

self, and to nature, and to God; of putting him consciously in the highest moral position of which he felt his moral nature to be capable; if, that is, it was attended with moral results analogous to those physical effects produced in the woman with an issue of blood, who "felt in her body that she was healed of that plague," and in the man born blind, who said, "one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see,"—that would of itself constitute an amount of confirming evidence to the truth of it which no sane man could venture to despise. It would not be demonstrative evidence, only because not of the nature of such evidence, but it would be evidence in its kind no less conclusive, and evidence, to him who was the subject of it, even more conclusive, because the evidence of the whole man, and not merely of one faculty of his mind.

Now in the case before us, both these ways of confirmation meet; the way of external revelation, and the way of inward and conscious certainty. St. Paul (in his own personal history, a standing witness to the truth of Christ) declares that all who believe are forgiven, and set morally right in Christ. There is made a *tabula rasa* of past existence and past sin, and life begins anew with them on a new and rectified basis. The effect wrought on their entire nature is a witness to it, for "he that believeth hath the witness in himself."

While, therefore, it would seem that we have all the proof of this position being real and valid that we need, on the one hand, or can demand on the other,—the concurrent evidence of outward fact and of inward consciousness in the history of St. Paul,—we must not forget that there open to us yet other sources of proof if we choose to make experiment for ourselves of what he declares. For then we also may possess that same righteousness and pardon through belief which was to him nothing less than an inward revelation of the truth. It may not, indeed, in our case, be accompanied by the accidents of miraculous circumstance that attended it in his, but it will have a force scarcely less weighty, and not one whit less conclusive.

The students of physical science recognise three preliminary stages in the method of conducting their inquiries. First, observation; secondly, experiment; thirdly, verification. We must, in the first place, observe and register the phenomena of nature; we must, in the second, experiment upon them; we must, in the third, verify the results obtained. And the same method may be pursued spiritually. We must first acknowledge the effects produced by the contemplation of the facts of the life of Christ; we must next submit these effects to the test of our own personal experiment; we must ourselves take hold of the electric chain which is to communicate to us the

influence of an unknown sensation; and lastly, we must verify the results obtained by constant reflection and by persevering prayer: by so doing, we shall find that we verify the true and detect the false. If we decline to hold the electric chain, we must not be surprised if we feel no shock; if we refuse to comply with the conditions of the experiment, we have no right to complain should it not succeed. But if we submit ourselves fairly and honestly to the influence which the Gospel would bring to bear upon us, we may trust it to verify itself by producing inwardly "righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost."

There is no manner of question that it was thus with the great Apostle, and if the faith he preached is a living reality, it is not only capable of producing the like results now, but must and will do so where there is a corresponding hold of it. If in Christ Jesus there *is* forgiveness of sins, and if by Him "all that believe *are* justified," then, most assuredly, that which was offered by St. Paul at Antioch to all, without distinction, is the heritage of Gentile as well as Jew, and may be the priceless possession of Englishmen in the nineteenth century after Christ, no less than of Greeks or Asiatics in the first. There wants but the same tenacious grasp of truth, the same uncompromising zeal, the same unflinching boldness, and the ancient message will awaken the old response. The same flower will bud and open, will form and

set, will develope and ripen in the mature and golden autumn of Christian experience, into the same rich, fragrant, and luscious fruit which will be "Christ in us, the hope of glory."

LECTURE IV

THE COURAGE OF ST. PAUL

ROM. i. 16, 17

"*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.*"

IN my last Lecture I endeavoured to show the kind of evidence we have to the nature of St. Paul's belief. This evidence was drawn from writings universally acknowledged to be his, and as far as I am aware, it was not unduly pressed. Taking it at the lowest estimate, his faith is still found to be of standard and sterling value. The ring of the metal is the genuine and the true one; the stamp is not counterfeit, but real.

In other words, suppose these Epistles to have been written and published for the first time in our own day, what is the kind of impression they would produce? What is the kind of opinion we should form of them? Would they possess the interest of the last novel and startling theory? Would they attract the attention of the intellectual

and the learned, like some brilliant and sparkling contribution to a review? Would they chime in with the tone of thought which is found among the flippant and the frivolous? Would they satisfy the insatiable longing for something new and strange of the wavering, the unsettled, the indifferent, or the half-believing? Are these the kind of treatises in which *they* would naturally take delight? As a matter of fact, are they the subjects of their frequent and spontaneous study? I do not mean for the critical and philological questions arising out of them, but purely and simply for the marrow and substance of their matter? Is not the interest which happens to attach to them of an antiquarian rather than a *human* character? There can be no doubt as to the answer which must be given to these questions in a vast majority of cases.

And yet, it is certain that St. Paul's claim to the attention of mankind rests not on the niceties of his language, or the multiplicity of absorbing questions that arise out of his history and his works, but upon that plain and definite message which it was the sole and direct object of his writings to convey. Neither is that message, again, of an uncertain or ambiguous character. If we would but treat his letters as writings of our own age, we should feel that it is not. The persons to whom he wrote were of all classes and conditions; there were, doubtless, men of excep-

tional penetration among them, as there were also of exalted station; there were those, probably, who had been trained in the subtleties of a Greek education, as well as those who occupied the room of the unlearned. But it would be absurd to place the average standard of intelligence *higher* than it is among ourselves. And yet, on the other hand, it would be no less absurd to suppose that the main features of the message which the Apostle intended to convey were not intelligible to the *least* educated of his disciples. He must have had an object in writing: what that object was is sufficiently clear and manifest. He must have had something of importance to say. Unless he was a far less skilful writer than we suppose him to have been, he must have made that important thing sufficiently plain and intelligible. And if, again, as we believe, the importance of it was altogether independent of time, the real nature and essence of it must be no less intelligible to us than it was to the first believers.

Now, in an age like ours, it is very needful to allow to such considerations as these their due weight. It is not for one moment that we disparage or under-rate the great importance of critical, philological, historical, geographical, or other questions involved in the full interpretation of St. Paul's writings; but what we do assert is this, that it is possible to leave out, for a time, the consideration of these and kindred questions,

and to concentrate our attention exclusively on the real question at issue, which is wholly independent of them.

For example, the sum and substance of a Christian man's belief is contained in the Apostles' Creed. To the terms of that creed we are all of us pledged by our baptism. We are received as Christians if we believe it; we are rejected if we do not. It may be all very well to expand that creed into the creed of Nicæa, the creed of Constantinople, the creed of St. Athanasius, the confession of Augsburg, the Westminster confession, or the Thirty-nine Articles; but that which is known as the Apostles' Creed remains the creed of our baptism. Many who could rally round that would be found to separate before the greater stringency of some of the others; but to none who accepted *that* could we venture to deny the name of Christian.

And in proportion as any were more occupied with the special peculiarities of the longer symbols would they be in danger of forgetting the fundamental truths that were common to all alike. The statements of the Apostles' Creed are those which contain the most vital truths, and not the additional propositions of later ages. It is by drawing nigh to the heart and marrow of these that we approach the seat of life, and not by clinging tenaciously to the outward coverings which are of foreign substance and inferior worth.

And it most certainly is not otherwise here. The central and essential verities that St. Paul enunciated are independent of the minuter questions of criticism; these latter are subservient to them, and by no means of prior importance. It was not criticism that changed the face of the heathen world in the first age, or that shook the foundations of Rome fifteen centuries later; but the outpouring of a new *spirit*, that had been forgotten and despised. And it is not that our own knowledge requires to be increased, for the knowledge of this age is various and profound; but the knowledge that we have requires to be quickened by the inbreathing of a Divine Spirit, which is none other than the Spirit of Pentecost[1]. The bare truths that Jesus lived, and died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven, have before now wrought wonders, and they are destined to do so again. It is because the writings of St. Paul bear conclusive testimony to these facts, and testimony that is untouched by criticism, that they are of inestimable value to the world. And it is this feature of them we desire to elicit, knowing that here they appeal to the wider sympathies of mankind, and that here is, in fact, their impregnable strength.

Let us look, then, at this great servant of Jesus Christ, while longing to visit the Roman Christians, and writing from Corinth his letter to

[1] Preached on Whit-Sunday.

Rome[2]. "I am not ashamed," he says, "of the Gospel of Christ." Why should he be? Was there any thing in it to make him ashamed? Yes, verily, there was much. There was shame with the men of his own nation, for he had forsaken the faith of his fathers; he was known as a renegade and an apostate; in professing the Gospel of Christ he professed connexion with a sect which was every where spoken against. There was shame there with the world at large; with the refined, the intellectual, the luxurious, the men of a merely animal life, who believed not in truth, and who disregarded virtue,—with these he was esteemed as "the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things[3];" he was the Apostle of a profession and a faith which was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness,"—there was every thing, therefore, to make him ashamed.

Moreover, it would seem that he had very recently been the unwilling cause of a disgraceful uproar at the chief city of proconsular Asia, which had, doubtless, brought him no small accession of popular hatred. He was a political outcast; a condition which may have been partly instrumental in preventing him from again visiting Ephesus, and inducing him to adopt the other expedient of summoning the elders of the Church there to meet him at Miletus. And yet, if

[2] Acts xix. 21; xx. 1, 2. [3] 1 Cor. iv. 13.

all this was so, why was he not ashamed of what was itself notoriously shameful? Because he was a disciple of the truth: that was the key to his boldness, that was the secret of his courage.

Now we must estimate very carefully the *kind* of truth, which, from the evidence before us, we have no difficulty in doing. It was not scientific or philosophical truth; not that kind of truth which has such absorbing interest for, such absolute command over, the trained and accomplished mind. The sciences, properly so called, are in no sense indebted to the writings or to the life of St. Paul. No mathematical operation is named from him; no scientific discovery boasts of him as its author. The truth to which he was devoted was of a totally different kind; we in no way depreciate the value of scientific truth by pointing out the difference, any more than we do in defining, for special purposes, the respective differences or values of art and science.

Neither, again, was the truth, of which Paul was an Apostle, justly to be regarded as political truth. The doctrines he proclaimed had, indeed, a most direct and significant bearing on the politics of the world, but this was an accident of them; it was not on account of their political bearing that he proclaimed them. He studiously avoided mixing himself up with the quarrels and concerns of the political parties of his day, or with

the administration and machinery of the Empire. By Agrippa and by Festus he was acquitted of any political offence. Like his Divine Master, whose "follower" he was, the powers that be were scrupulously reverenced and had in honour by him. He himself claimed the protection of the supreme authority of the State. The misapprehension that we discover in "these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus[4]," is almost unintelligible to us who have been taught, "My kingdom is not of this world." Nothing is more certain than that it is impossible to represent the Gospel which Paul preached as a kind of political creed which he was anxious to propagate. The testimony of all history is against the notion. We can discover no relation or analogy between the advocates of free trade, or the ballot, in our own day, as such, and the first preachers of the Gospel. The orbits of the two are totally distinct, and in no point does one necessarily intersect or touch the other. Accident may produce a combination of circumstances, in which one may have an indirect bearing on the other, but for all that they are essentially distinct. It is probable that Peter and Paul were put to death as political malefactors, but they were none the less innocent of any offence against the constitution of the Empire. Whatever else they were, they were not

[4] Acts xvii. 7.

political reformers; theirs was, in no strict sense, a *political* creed.

What, then, was the nature and domain of that truth which Paul proclaimed, and in the strong conviction of which he was not ashamed? It was truth which concerned, not the intellect of mankind, or the political framework of society, but the spiritual constitution of the race; it was truth which was addressed immediately to the conscience of mankind. The voice of the first preachers of the Gospel was heard like the sound of a mounted traveller, echoing through the desolate and ruined corridors of some vast and magnificent temple which had long lain waste, and had been untenanted and unvisited of its God. The altar was overthrown, the sanctuary forsaken, the courts and precincts were choked with briars and overgrown with weeds, the birds nestled and reared their young in the costly friezes and the lofty pediments; it was dismantled within, and decayed without; the marble floor was the haunt of unclean beasts; the winds sighed, and the owls hooted through the pillars and the aisles; and the whole was open to the wide vault of heaven, to the heat by day, and to the frost by night. But it was beautiful in its decay. The hand of the master was conspicuous every where; throughout were the traces of sublime intelligence, and infinite wisdom, and exquisite skill; every thing bespoke how fair it once had been, how fair it yet

might be, if the God would return to His forsaken shrine. For now the hoofs of the rider's horse awoke but the echoes of desolation, and discovered but the tokens of decay.

Such was the sound of the Gospel message, as it fell on the ears of a worn-out civilisation and a decayed humanity. It awoke the echoes of a forgotten past, aroused the slumbering recollections of a deity who was none other than the Ancient of Days, and called into life and sensibility the suspended consciousness of ruin. "You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins," is no inapt or overstrained representation of the work achieved by it. For they whose sound thus went out into all lands were the messengers of a mighty King who had given commandment to restore and to rebuild, and not merely to remind of desolation. And this was the special truth with which Paul was entrusted—this was the doctrine of which he was the Apostle; a spiritual truth whose province and sphere was the ruined, but undying spirit of man; which concerned not his intellect, or his political constitution, or his artificial development, but his moral nature, and the mysterious framework of his conscience and his will. It had to deal with what had never before effectually been dealt with, namely, *sin*. It spoke direct to the inmost recesses of man's personal being. It detected the hollowness, the falsehood, and the wrong of which

he vainly endeavoured to forget that he was conscious, and it made him aware of a vast debt of responsibility to One whom till now he had neither recognised nor known.

It revealed to him a new relation in which he stood to this unknown Being; it proclaimed to him miracles of love and mercy which had been wrought on his behalf; the care of a Father; the affection of a Friend who was faithful even unto death; the grace and glory of a Spirit who was perfect in holiness, the bestower of purity and peace.

And while speaking of all this, it won with the cords of a man, and with bands of love, the heart of the erring and the lost to the Being of whose love it assured him. And as the seed contains the undeveloped tree, and the flower contains the fruit, so this new principle of Divine love contained within itself the utmost perfection of which man's moral nature was capable. In making him righteous towards God, it made him just also towards his fellow-man, faithful, honest, and true; it made him compassionate and merciful, tender and gentle, noble and self-sacrificing, brave and valiant. It contained within itself all that was fairest and loveliest in art and literature, in manners and chivalry, in the conduct of life, and the prosecution of knowledge. It gave a fresh impulse to science and to civilisation, to commercial enterprise and to social progress; because it

took away the dark cloud of uncertainty and hopelessness which hung around the future. We may deny that these things are, in any degree, the effects of the Gospel which Paul preached, but it is a matter of fact, that they have characterised the latter ages of the world; and it is likewise a matter of certainty, that we may be under obligations to the light of Christ, that it is easy to disown, but impossible to calculate.

Again, we need not be at any loss to understand more clearly the nature of that truth which was to the Apostle a sure antidote to shame, if we duly consider his own estimate of it. We shall then see manifestly that its peculiar sphere was neither science nor politics, and cannot with any degree of justice be confounded with either. He speaks of it as "the power of God unto salvation." Now the only way in which we can escape from the necessary force of these words is by reducing "the power of God" to identity with the physical forces of nature, and by regarding "salvation" as an alternative expression for temporal health, safety, protection, and the like.

But here, if a tendency had not actually manifested itself to understand the Pauline language thus, we might almost be excused the mention of it; as it is, one need assuredly do but little more than observe how completely such a method of interpretation fails to justify itself. If the Apostle had meant this, why could he not say he meant

it? Such language would have been intelligible to every one; there could have been no dispute about it, except, indeed, as regards the fact, and here it would have carried its own refutation with it. For how could such a Gospel as we have seen that he proclaimed be in any way connected with the mere working of the physical forces of nature? How could its natural result be some form of that temporal health and safety which is alleged? How could the death of Christ be God's mighty method of preserving the physical life and senses? It seems too monstrous to demand even a passing notice.

But we must not fail to observe that the degree of its improbability is the exact measure of the stringency with which we are shut up to the opposite and only possible interpretation. The Gospel that Paul preached dealt primarily, not to say exclusively, in its more immediate effects with the spirits and souls of men. It had, indeed, a reflex action on the whole constitution of man, including even his social and material organisation, but its first and most direct aim was his spiritual regeneration and his eternal glory. The "gift" which it bestowed was the "gift" of "eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord[5]." It proclaimed the spirit of man as that part of his nature in which he was most at fault; that his relations with God were those in which he

[5] Rom. vi. 23.

principally required to be set right. Health and soundness introduced here would extend the blessings of salvation to the whole man. But no schemes of amelioration would really benefit him till he was readjusted in his relations to God.

And to the accomplishment of this end the doctrine of a crucified and risen Jesus was nothing short of "the power of God unto salvation." For it came with a power altogether supernatural and Divine, and bestowed salvation where it was most wanted and most welcome.

Nor is it a just ground of complaint that the salvation spoken of is not a subject which admits of scientific definition, that what is actually meant by it remains indeterminate and vague. It cannot be otherwise; because, as before shown, its sphere is not the intellect or mind of man, which is the special domain of science, but the spiritual nature of man, in which he is capable of renovation after the image of God. Science cannot define God, nor conceive what is meant by the image of God, an expression in the nomenclature of science which is self-contradictory; so neither can it appreciate a salvation which offers to restore man to God's image. For science can only appreciate what it can take cognisance of, can measure and compute; but this is confessedly beyond its ken, and therefore outside of its territory. But unless it can be shown that man has no other faculties than those of mind and body, exception must not

be taken against that which professes to deal primarily with these other faculties—the faculties, namely, of spiritual existence, the will, the affections, and the indivisible personal essence in its aspect of moral accountability.

It is, indeed, proposed now-a-days to leave out all this vast district of man's nature, which is like denying the existence of a country which we have not ourselves explored or visited. Against the fatal absurdity, however, of such a course is the fact that from time to time there come back to us the graphic and soul-stirring narratives of those who have themselves visited these regions. They proclaim to us their richness, their beauty, their vastness; they cause us to see, as it were with our own eyes, the long vistas of glory, the wide fields of peace and prosperity, the fertile pastures, and the cooling streams, of the land that floweth with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands, and the special glory of this land that lies conterminous with our own.

Now St. Paul was one of those who had visited these less familiar regions of our common nature; and the accounts he gave of them have induced many to make the like journey for themselves, and they have found them substantiated by the experience of fact. There *is* a land where the inhabitants are "all righteous[6]," and "the people that dwell therein have been forgiven their

[6] Isa. lx. 21.

iniquity[7]." For in this land "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith," and the Gospel of Jesus Christ is "the power of God unto salvation." But before we can judge thereof we must ourselves enter it. Not more unreasonable would it be to question or deny the narratives of accredited travellers, not having tested them by personal investigation, than it is to pour contempt upon these statements because we have not ourselves taken the pains to verify them. For nothing can be more conspicuous than the ignorance of such persons on the subjects upon which they profess to decide. And in direct contrast to such ignorance, as well as with the logic of unanswerable assertion, the Apostle declares, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, because" it is found to be, and always will be found to be, "the power of God unto salvation;" the only sufficient agency which can save man from himself, which can make him a whole man, and restore the lost image of God within him.

There is, perhaps, scarcely any subject of theological statement more beset with difficulty, or more openly called in question, than what is known as the fall of man. And the obscurity attending it is increased from the fact of its being commonly mixed up with the profound mystery of original sin. But it may be questioned whether light does not break in even upon this hope-

[7] Isa. xxxiii. 24.

lessly dark subject when we approach it as St. Paul does. For without laying the foundation of his theological system in the fall of man, there can be no question but that he approached mankind as fallen. So far, then, whatever may have been man's original constitution, the glad tidings proclaimed by St. Paul are equally applicable to man's existing condition.

For whatever man may have been originally, there is and can be no sort of question what he is now. On all sides we are confronted by appalling tokens of human depravity and corruption. Not for one moment denying the many splendid examples of transcendent virtue which have adorned and glorified our race, and for which multitudes are still illustrious, there is, after all, no denying the equally patent fact that we are, both as individuals and as a race, inherently, if not hopelessly, corrupt. The real question, therefore, is not what we once were, not whether we were ever different from what we now are, but whether being what we are, we possess capabilities of being raised to something nobler and better; and then, supposing that we do possess them, whether or not the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the ordained means for raising us,—whether it is of actually Divine appointment for that end,—or whether there is any other better and more efficient agency which can be discovered or devised.

Now this is the main issue from age to age between the Gospel of Christ and other schemes of human invention: *it* shrinks not from open competition with all such schemes. Once for all its challenge has been thrown down for the world's acceptance, and that challenge is the *Cross*. Till any one can show us a method of more decided and heroic virtue, an act of more transcendent and superhuman glory, as well as of more demonstrably Divine fitness for the wants of the human heart, than that, we may rest assured that the influence of the Cross, which is "the power of God unto salvation," will never cease to be felt.

Here is the stronghold of the Gospel against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. You may dispute as you will about the abstract questions of theology; you may theorise and speculate as you will about the origin of man; you may investigate as you can the few and faint and scarcely visible traces and fragments out of which to reconstruct the history of pre-historic man; but here is a power which deals with man as he is, and is *practically* indifferent to what he may have been: in this sense it cares nothing about the past, it deals only with the perpetual and unvarying present. When sin is not an inseparable element in man's nature, but not till then, we may fear for the triumphs of the Cross.

So far, then, as the Gospel which Paul preached

presented itself in any sense as an adequate remedy for the existing condition of humanity,—and no one can read the Epistle to the Romans, and fail to see that whatever else it was, it certainly professed to be this,—so far we have absolute proof that man *is* what the Gospel represents him; namely, a being with a corrupt nature, that is, a *fallen* being, whether or not we understand that term to imply that the condition of man, historically, was ever otherwise. We may not have some of the vices which were the reproach of the ancient world, as depicted at the opening of the Epistle to the Romans, but what about our gigantic commercial frauds? What about the crime and pauperism of our large cities? What about the shameless corruption of much of our social life? Are not these things alone—and there are many more, God knows—sufficient to prove to us, if proof were wanted, that there is something radically wrong in human nature? Nay, does not the heart of every individual bear conscious testimony to a deep inward moral infection? We cannot deny, because we know and feel that we are fallen. So far, then, the corruption of our nature is a *fact*.

Nor is it impossible to ascertain from the nature of the remedy suggested, the nature of our fall[8]. Now the remedy suggested by the Gospel

[8] Man's original constitution, the Scripture says, was one of faith, or dependence upon God. When he fell, he lost the

is, in one word, Faith. St. Paul declares that all mankind are by nature devoid of righteousness. If his statements mean any thing, they mean this; but he declares with equal clearness that all mankind may become righteous by believing on "Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead[9]." We do not lose our fallen nature, but we lose the moral effects of it, in our relation to God. The remedy for the fall is belief in God, through Jesus Christ. Faith supplies that grand defect of our nature to which all human experience testifies. If, then, faith is the remedy for the fall, what was the fall itself but want of faith? The normal, not to say the original, constitution of man is that of faith in God. He is created to exist in a condition of trusting dependence upon God. That he does not do so is the evidence of his fall. The natural man cannot trust in God. For "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto

support which he had from above in God, and could not of himself regain it, any more than a man falling from a height above him could of his own unaided efforts replace himself in the position from which he fell. This fallen condition, being a moral one, affecting the nature, would naturally be inherited by all his posterity. But as the remedy provided is exactly commensurate with the need, the justice of God in permitting that need is vindicated, and His mercy displayed and magnified in the provision made for it. Reason can only perceive a part of the wisdom of this procedure; it is the office of Faith to believe in the rest.

[9] Rom. iv. 24.

him: neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned[1]." His spiritual nature is dead in consequence of the fall, and till he is spiritually quickened he cannot believe, nor therefore live, for faith is to the soul the very breath of life. Thus according to St. Paul, "as in Adam," that is, as far as they are merely natural men, "all die, even so in Christ," that is, as far as they are quickened by the life of the spiritual man, which is faith towards God, "shall all be made alive[2]."

Nor does the Scripture account of the origin of sin differ from this, for it refers the origin of it to disbelief in the spoken word of God, "Yea, hath God said[3]?" In other words the first sin, that is, the historic fall of man, was want of faith; and with that marvellous consistency, which is the characteristic of *truth* alone, our Lord said that when the Holy Ghost came He should convince the world "of sin, because they believe not on Me;" and this Apostle declares of

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 14.

[2] 1 Cor. xv. 22. Cf. Rom. v. 12. 19. Davidson regards these passages as inconsistent. Introduction to N. T. i. 64. But is not St. Paul speaking of a different order of time in each? That man possessed only an earthly or animal nature, devoid of that spiritual nature which counteracts it, was the consequence of Adam's sin. It is needless to add that the whole subject is a profound mystery which we cannot understand. The facts are obvious enough, and it is with these that the Bible deals.

[3] Gen. iii. 1.

the Gospel of Christ, that "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," and that in it "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith," a righteousness which springs from faith, appeals to faith, and is received by faith.

The Gospel, then, is the great exhibition of God's righteousness, on the one hand, and, on the other, being so regarded and *believed*, it becomes, to every one believing it, God's own appointed means of making him righteous, God's ordained instrument for the moral regeneration of mankind.

The question, then, may fairly arise, Is it so, or is it not? If it is not so, we have two necessary consequences to face. In the first place all that St. Paul wrote in these four Epistles of the moral power of the grace of God acting upon faith is proved a lie; it is simply not true; there is no such agency in the world; it is a delusion, and all who have ever believed in it have been deluded. And then all the wonderful deeds of faith, in obedience to the principles of the Gospel, of which the history of Christendom is full, and of which we ourselves have manifold living examples before us, spring from delusion, and are evidences, not of the power of truth, but of the power of falsehood, and though of themselves corroborating the accuracy and justice of the apostolic assertions, must together with those assertions be rejected.

In which case, secondly, not only had Paul

abundant cause to be heartily ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, but, more than this, we cannot understand why he was not; we cannot comprehend how it was that, brought up in a totally opposite belief, a belief so opposite that even he, with all his largeheartedness, who was "made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some[4]," was at a loss to reconcile the two, but gave up one, and with one, gave up all, for the other.

And, yet more, not only is his conduct unintelligible, but so likewise is that strange episode in his career, which as we have seen has so many elements of unquestionable truth mixed up with it, that we know not how to reject even if we do not believe it, nor how to explain if we do not reject it. We cannot understand why his opinions should have undergone a change so total, nor why, in changing them, his moral and physical nature should have been so convulsed and distracted—why the circumstances should have occurred but for the change, and why the change should have been attended with the circumstances—if he had not ample cause for not being ashamed of the Gospel which he preached, and if that cause was not the one which he himself assigned,—because he knew that it had been in his own case "the power of God unto salvation," and that it would universally be found to be so by every one that believed it.

[4] 1 Cor. ix. 22.

On the other hand, if all that was said by St. Paul of the moral and spiritual power of the Gospel was the actual truth—if, as is indeed the case, his whole life is a hopeless puzzle, but on the supposition of its truth—then *What is the witness of St. Paul to Christ?* It is simply a witness that can never fail; it will last as long as the world lasts. He could not have been what he was, he could not have done what he did, but for the Gospel of Christ being what he said it was. Somehow or other there was something in the glad tidings "concerning Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, but declared to be the Son of God by power, according to the spirit of holiness, by [His] resurrection from the dead," which was able to reconcile him to the loss of all things, to make him bold and unflinching in his testimony to Christ, regardless of hardship, and danger, and suffering; to give him a deep inward and unshaken conviction of peace with God, a strong sense of righteousness before him which, until he became a Christian, he had never been able to obtain; and finally to put him in possession of a new life which had this witness about itself, that it was absolutely indestructible, and which was mysteriously renewed day by day, though the outward man perished continually.

It is surely not too much to say that testimony such as this is worthy the attentive consideration

of mankind; for we know, with a certainty which admits of no dispute, that all this was literally the fact with St. Paul. His character is one which is perfectly intelligible to us now; the main features of his history are not only familiar, but absolutely certain; his motives we can estimate without risk of error: but believe it was all based upon a lie, believe that he was the victim of delusion, infatuation, self-deceit,—believe that the cardinal facts he proclaimed, as intrinsic elements of the Gospel, which can no more be dissociated from the moral teaching he inculcated than the moral teaching can be severed from the facts, were after all no facts at all,—and you have a phenomenon in history which not only cannot be explained, but which most assuredly could never have existed, and which therefore did not exist.

This is the legitimate and the only legitimate issue of which the question admits. Certain results followed the belief in certain facts concerning a certain Person; or, at least, a certain man believed that in his own case the results followed the belief, that wherever the same facts were proclaimed the same results would follow, for which reason he devoted his life to proclaiming them, and left behind him writings which are to all time a perpetual witness that in Rome, Corinth, and Galatia, the proclamation of these facts was attended with the like results.

In all fairness, then, and common sense we are

justified in asserting that the preaching of the facts produced the results; for not only are no other means discoverable by which they could have been produced, but all in whom they were produced were agreed as to the cause producing them; there is, therefore, no other conclusion possible for ordinary, plain, and practical men, whatever conclusion may commend itself to speculative theorists as more likely or more intelligible.

But accepting this conclusion, we are warranted in going a step farther, and may say that the results, being what they most undoubtedly were, afford presumptive evidence of no ordinary kind, to say the very least, that the facts proclaimed were not spurious, but true; they were not the figments of the imagination, nor the exaggerated fancies of an excited brain, nor the distorted representations of a perverted and mythical story, but the actual events of historical reality, as much the occurrences of positive fact taking place in a common world as any other events which every one knew and no one cared to dispute; such, for example, as Paul's visit to Athens, or his shipwreck in the Mediterranean.

For, considering all points, it is impossible, or at least absurd, to suppose that the results following the belief of the facts in St. Paul's case would have been brought about at all in him, if the facts had been fictitious. He would not against his will and in spite of himself have believed them,

and that suddenly, when the whole bent of his mind was set in an opposite direction, had he not known that they were real, valid, and true; such as he himself could not dispute, though he had disputed them.

But even if he had given his assent to them on insufficient ground, they would still not have wrought the change in him which we know they wrought, had they not in themselves that principle of vitality and life which it is plain that they communicated to, and begat in him. If Christ had not died, and risen again, he could not have said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me;" but because he could and did say it, we can understand the wisdom as well as the boldness of his undaunted challenge to the foremost city of the world, a challenge which is made likewise to this age, and will be made to the latest generations of the most distant future: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

LECTURE V

THE INFLUENCE OF ST. PAUL

1 Cor. ii. 4, 5

"*And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*"

THE subject of our last Lectures was mainly the evidence afforded by St. Paul's writings of the great inward effects produced by his teaching on those who were brought under its influence. When he spoke of the peace, purity, holiness, and joy which were the common results of the Gospel, it is clear that he not only experienced these himself, but that the persons to whom he wrote experienced them also. It was as though he had appealed to those who had been common spectators of one and the same event; for he wrote not as describing what was unknown, but what was familiar. If, therefore, he was deceived as to these results, many likewise were deceived in all parts of the habitable world where

he had preached. The deception had pervaded all sections and classes of life. It had penetrated into Cæsar's palace, and had touched even the chamberlain of the city of Corinth, and the deputy of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus. It had spread like an infection over vast tracts of country and large portions of mankind.

Now, for the present, it is a matter of no importance whether the influence was a good or a bad one; whether it was delusion or madness, or any thing else. The fact of its general *prevalence* is the first point that we have to seize; and about this fact there is and can be no diversity of opinion. We may take the sentiments expressed in the Epistles, for instance, to Rome and Corinth, as sentiments with which the minds of the Christians there were in full accord. And any statements of fact contained in them as part of the message delivered must undoubtedly be reckoned as a portion of the faith which was common to all. The Christians at Rome and Corinth believed with an intensity of faith, no weaker than St. Paul's, in the death of Christ on the cross, in the resurrection, in the exaltation to glory, and in the outpouring of the Spirit. Moreover, all knew perfectly well that this outpouring was inseparably connected with belief in these facts; that till they had heard of the facts, and believed them, they had been altogether ignorant, as a fact, of any spiritual outpouring. It was an entirely new

experience consequent upon belief in a Person, the main facts of whose existence had been brought before them; and all were more or less the subjects of this experience, which, as the facts concerning the Person were the same, was likewise the same in all cases, due allowance being made of course for peculiarities of individual constitution.

I pass by, then, for the present, the extreme improbability of such results even following the proclamation of facts in themselves misrepresented or untrue. It can scarcely fail to strike every candid mind; but, for the while, we will not insist upon it, but rather direct attention to another feature, manifest on the face of St. Paul's allowed writings, which is no less unquestionable, and is even more significant than the last.

Now this is the clear evidence we possess, mainly, indeed, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, but incidentally likewise elsewhere, of extraordinary and in every sense miraculous gifts being then in the possession of the Church. It is no less certain that many Christians at Corinth spoke with tongues and prophesied, possessed gifts of healing and wrought miracles [1], and that some abused these gifts, than that in the same Church the Eucharistic feast was profaned by drunkenness, unseemly conduct, and excess. No one will deny the latter, but the

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 9, 10.

former is equally undeniable. It rests upon unimpeachable testimony, and for these reasons.

No one writing a letter to a number of persons deeply attached to him, and to whom he likewise was attached, could possibly think of rebuking them for errors of which they were guiltless; of charging them with offences they had not committed. The idea is simply preposterous. The Church at Corinth was guilty, on the one hand, of incest, and, on the other, of gross profanation of spiritual gifts. It admits neither of doubt nor denial. Paul had heard of this condition of things, and the Corinthians knew it to be true. They were guilty of scandalous irregularities, not only in morals, but in the management of certain gifts and endowments that had been bestowed upon them. And the Apostle's rebuke on this latter head is irresistible proof that such gifts existed, and were common at Corinth.

Now we all know that it is a matter of doubt what was the nature of these gifts. There is a strong tendency in the present day to reduce the supernatural to the smallest possible limits, and, if possible, to get rid of it altogether. We are impatient at the bare contemplation of a miracle; we question the evidence, doubt the testimony, and think that if *we* had been present at the time with our superior enlightenment, more scientific education, and calmer judgment, we should have been persuaded that the supposed

miracle was no miracle at all—it is more than probable.

Most likely, at the time when they occurred, the best attested miracles did not seem miraculous. Many, probably, of the five thousand who were fed by Christ saw in it nothing extraordinary; the very fact of their witnessing it made it common to them; doubtless, St. John himself *at the time* did not see what he afterwards saw in it. And we know on his authority, that some of those who saw Lazarus come forth bound hand and foot with graveclothes, did not believe that Jesus had raised him from the dead. St. John himself, probably, believed it more deeply and firmly the older he grew. And it is in the nature of all events, of any kind whatever, even those which have occurred within the sphere of our own experience, to lose in apparent probability with the lapse of time; though, of course, it is no less true that any event once a fact is a fact for ever, quite irrespective of the subjective sentiments it occasions.

We must not wonder, therefore, at a growing dislike of regarding miracles as miracles, at a growing desire to explain them away. It is incidental to the greater lapse of time, and incidental to the spirit of the age. But few persons, for example, are able to regard the miracles of the Old Testament as equally sure and certain with the miracles of our Lord. Clearly, therefore, the

gifts of tongues, prophecy, and healing, in the early Church, cannot be expected to escape unchallenged.

Let us inquire, then, on what evidence they rest. Now it is to be observed, that they rest not only on the evidence of St. Paul, but of the whole Corinthian Church. His evidence is the evidence of the Corinthian Christians as a body. His Epistle is their tacit and involuntary admission that the abuses complained of were common and notorious. And it would still be so even if the Epistle could be proved to have been forged in the second century; because, even in that case, a forger would be careful to give his work at least the semblance of reality, which would consequently demand a known condition of the Church at Corinth similar to the one depicted. The Corinthians, then, must have been *traditionally* guilty of these offences, and to such an extent as to make it seem probable that St. Paul would write an Epistle to rebuke them, similar to the forged one. But this is a position so monstrous, and confessedly so untenable, that it need not detain us.

Again, it is not really a matter of importance what was the exact nature of the gifts in question. The speaking with tongues, if really a spontaneous command of unpractised and unfamiliar languages, would, doubtless, be a stupendous manifestation of supernatural power, which could scarcely fail

to command the respectful consideration even of the most obstinate. The evidence seems to me to be not insufficient for such a conclusion, but we will not press the point; there are other points about it more certain than this. We must remember that divers as are the gifts enumerated, they are mainly of four kinds: namely, tongues, prophecy, gifts of healing, and working of miracles, for a distinction is drawn between these two last[2]. If, then, there was any deception or exaggeration, it was carried, so to say, into four distinct regions or provinces.

Those who had witnessed the operation of gifts of healing had, of course, witnessed also ordinary recoveries of health. Were all these people unable to distinguish between the two, even those to whom, by the way, is attributed also the possession of another gift, that, namely, of discerning of spirits? Could those who discerned spirits, whatever that was, not discern between the ordinary operations of medical skill and similar operations which were independent of it? Could St. Paul himself, who knew what it was to be "pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that he despaired even of life," and "had the sentence of death in himself," notwithstanding those resources of miraculous power, which within certain limits he speaks of possessing, and apparently did possess; could he, I say, not determine or distin-

[2] 1 Cor. xii. 9, 10.

guish between what he meant by a gift of healing and the ordinary operation of the healing art? Though, doubtless, in all cases recognising God as the Healer of man, was he so loose in his language as well as his ideas as to invent a new phrase expressive of a new power or faculty, which, as a matter of fact, did not exist, and which, therefore, demanded no special epithet to denote it. The thing is absolutely incredible; it cannot be.

Or, again, in the case of what are here called miracles, which are plainly distinguished from the gift of tongues and prophecy as well as from healing, are we to suppose that credulity or want of discrimination in St. Paul could not be checked or corrected by many of those to whom he wrote? Were they all alike under the influence of this delusion? Had they all agreed together, for this is what it comes to practically, to do their best to cheat the world for ever with respect to certain phenomena, of which otherwise they were either credible witnesses or else notorious dupes? The very power of discrimination manifest in distinguishing the working of miracles from a variety of other endowments all equally miraculous, is itself evidence of the strongest kind that neither the writer nor those he was addressing were, in any sense, dupes. We do them gross injustice to suppose that their critical discernment was inferior to our own.

And, in like manner, the line of separation drawn between tongues and prophecy is no less a mark of an actual difference in the gifts, and of the reality of both. Say that prophecy was little more than the faculty of spontaneous address, or an involuntary impulse prompting to it, then, at least, the gift of tongues was not *this;* or say that tongues were the manifestation of an ecstatic state under which inarticulate sounds were uttered, which were likewise afterwards interpreted by others possessing *that* power, then here we have evidence of three distinct faculties, which, whatever the value of them critically, were undoubtedly confined to the Christian assemblies, and were characteristic of those only who professed belief in Christ. In short, reduce to the lowest possible estimate the apparently miraculous nature of the gifts possessed by the Corinthian Christians, and you have still clear and incontrovertible evidence of special characteristics for which they were remarkable[3]. It is

[3] Davidson says, i. 53, "The Corinthian Church enjoyed a large measure of spiritual gifts. These were not equivalent to what are now called *miraculous*, but consisted in the exaltation of the natural faculties, the elevation and purification of talents belonging to humanity." It will be observed that the argument in the Lectures is independent of this assertion. An unusual development of the natural powers might afford confirmation to the truth of Christ; and if uniformly consequent upon belief in Jesus, as the Epistle shows it to have been, would assuredly not fail to do so.

useless attempting to get rid of this fact. We cannot in fairness do so.

Nor must we in our consideration of the present matter omit to notice one or two other points concerning it. For instance, we have apparent proof that the miraculous powers of the Corinthian Church were the subject of animadversion, not only to their own body, but to unbelievers also. St. Paul specifies the fact that "prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe[4]," as a reason for desiring the gift of prophecy rather than that of tongues. He contemplates the case, which, therefore had probably occurred, or was likely to occur, of disinterested and indifferent persons[5] or unbelievers witnessing the spectacle of the whole Church speaking with tongues, and of their deciding in consequence that they were mad. Now it is obvious that if any ordinary spectator in witnessing such a scene were to give such a judgment, there must at least have been something unusual or extraordinary to cause him to do so. We have, therefore, as it were, the unconscious and silent testimony of persons prejudiced against the Christians to the reality of those remarkable phenomena which characterised *them*.

Again, it is equally manifest that however common these gifts may have been in the Corinthian Church, they were, after all, excep-

[4] 1 Cor. xiv. 22. [5] ἰδιῶται.

tional. They were not in the possession of every one. Those who possessed them were the objects of a laudable envy to others. Now this fact of itself is a witness to their reality. Not less so is the circumstance that St. Paul does not speak of them in all his Epistles. In those to the Romans and Galatians the allusions to them are uncertain and obscure. St. Peter and St. John in their Epistles make no reference to them. The early literature of the Church is singularly devoid of traces of them. All this, then, goes to show that they were highly exceptional, and, as far as it does, shows also that their existence was a fact, and by no means the result of imposture or delusion.

And yet, further, the testimony to the existence of these miraculous gifts is enhanced rather than weakened by the position of conspicuous inferiority assigned to them by St. Paul himself. When he draws elaborate distinction between the different kinds of gifts, and exhorts the Corinthians to covet earnestly the *best* gifts, he at once rises to the highest flight of even Pauline eloquence in pointing out the more excellent way of charity, and in delineating *its* supreme importance. He, therefore, at least was not so carried away by astonishment at the supernatural phenomena he witnessed, or so dazzled by extravagant admiration for the lustre of them, as to lose his faculty of calm, critical judgment in estimating

their worth and excellence. He did not overrate them, but dissuaded others to the utmost of his power from being led away by their attractiveness from the pursuit of nobler and more ordinary gifts.

So far, then, as his conduct here is wise and judicious, so far does it tend to enhance the value of his evidence in favour of the existence in the Church at large, and especially at Corinth, of these miraculous gifts. We are bound to believe that one who could give such discreet and common sense directions for the regulation of these gifts, and estimate their importance so wisely, could not possibly be deceived as to the reality of their actual existence; there was neither mistake, collusion, nor imposture. The Church at Corinth was in possession of miraculous gifts, and was guilty of abuse and irregularity in the exercise of them. This is a position which must be acknowledged by all to be wholly and absolutely impregnable. It would be far more unreasonable to question it than to submit to the weight of irresistible evidence by which it is sustained.

Seeing, then, that this is a fair estimate of the condition of the Church at Corinth in respect of spiritual endowments, we must proceed to notice the invariable law they followed; which, again, is neither a matter of uncertainty nor of doubt. They did not and could not exist apart from belief in the name of Jesus. "I give you to

understand," says the Apostle, "that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus, Anathema: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost[6]." On any interpretation of these words it is clear that the divers gifts of the Holy Spirit could only exist when they were accompanied with a recognition of Jesus as "the Lord," or putting the formula at its lowest possible worth, as "Lord." That is, both the exercise of supernatural gifts, and the acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord, were equally the work of the Holy Spirit alone. They may not have been co-extensive in the Christian body, but each was the exclusive work of the Spirit. But, as a matter of fact, we know that the possession of the gifts was not universal as to time and place in the Christian body, whereas no one could become a member of that body but by confessing Christ as Lord.

Now what did this confession imply? It implied, at the least, that Jesus, who had been crucified, who had died the death of a malefactor, as we should say, on the gallows, was a living and ruling power, was not dead (for we have evidence in this same Epistle), but risen again. The Corinthians were told that if Jesus Christ was not risen again, that is, after being crucified, they were yet in their sins[7]: and this was manifestly no new doctrine inculcated then for the first

[6] 1 Cor. xii. 3. [7] 1 Cor. xv. 17.

time, but part of the original creed they had accepted, of which they required to be put in mind, and to be shown the wide practical bearing.

From this, then, we see that the gifts which were certainly possessed and exercised, were only exercised where there was a firm and sincere belief in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and in His government of the world as its sovereign Ruler. Where there was not this belief, or where this belief was weak or insincere, there certainly these gifts were not possessed: they could only be exercised where an honest and hearty confession of it had been made.

We have, then, established upon demonstrable proof, the existence and operation of certain gifts, which were, *as* manifestly, of a supernatural character, the circumstances of their evidence being fairly weighed. We know that their bestowal was the exclusive dowry of a particular confession of faith; of faith, that is, in a Person marked by a particular history and exercising at the time particular functions. Would any sane man witnessing such phenomena under such conditions, and witnessing them to the extent to which they were doubtless witnessed among the Churches at Corinth, say that the whole thing was delusive and false; or would he not rather, as seems occasionally to have happened, "falling down on his face, worship God, and report that God was in them of a truth"? Is it not obvious to common

sense that apart from the moral character of the persons professing the belief, with which we have nothing now to do, a faith which to a very large extent produced commonly such very uncommon results, would certainly appear to receive nothing less than supernatural confirmation?

And forasmuch as this supernatural confirmation, however it may fit in with our scientific predilections or educational bias, is really as well attested as any thing possibly can be, what are we to say of it now, but that it does furnish evidence of an enduring and perpetual character, which it is extremely difficult to set aside, that at one time in the history of the Church it seems actually to have pleased the Almighty to interpose, in an extraordinary manner, for the confirmation and establishment of belief in a particular Person, who was proclaimed as His own Son, and of whose human history crucifixion and resurrection were prominent and conspicuous features? In other words, have we not now, in the undoubted record of these gifts, a witness to the truth of that preaching which Paul proclaimed about Christ; which has, indeed, from its very remoteness lost its power of influencing us as it might do, but which needs only to be rightly estimated and duly weighed in order to come home to us with no less force than ever as the seal of the living God to the truth of the Gospel of His Son?

If it is a fact that God once spoke in this way,

then it is certain that what He said may be heard now; we have but to incline our ear, and we shall hear it as plainly as it was ever heard. It is borne across the wide waters of eighteen centuries from the shore of the ancient world, and is as clear and distinct in its utterance now as at the time it was first uttered. We may be distracted, on this modern strand of ours, with the roaring of many waters, anxious for the safety of many cargoes, deafened with the din of many alien and discordant voices, shattered and wrecked with many storms, and ruined with many losses, but in moments of heavenly calm, when the waves are stilled, and the winds are lulled, and the cares of life are hushed, we may hear it in the cool of the evening, as another voice of more solemn import was once heard in paradise, and that which it says to us will be what it once said on the banks of Jordan and on the mountain of vision, "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him."

But whether we hear it or not, it is none the less a fact that it still speaks. A certain condition of the atmosphere and of the elements may be needed, and still more a certain purging of the ears, but its utterance is distinct, and its message unmistakable; and, may be, if we hear it not now, we never should have heard it then, had we been present by the waters of Jordan, or on the mountain of Galilee. Nay, more; had it been permitted us to enter the assembly of the Church at

Corinth while the psalm or the prophecy, the tongue or its interpretation, was being delivered by the Spirit to the prophets, we should have taken our stand on the side of those who called Jesus Anathema, rather than of those who confessed Him to be the Lord.

For let us at least be well assured that no middle course was possible then, and as not possible then, so neither possible now. If we confess not that Jesus, the crucified, the risen and ascended, is the Lord; that in Him the human has been made Divine, "by taking the manhood into God;" then we cannot be received into the mystic body of the faithful. We may shrink from the imprecation of the fatal course, but that will not bring us under the dominion of the Spirit; for no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty—that liberty which is the freedom of those whom the Son has made free indeed. And in the effort to assume such an ambiguous and undecided standing-ground is the truth of that saying of the Lord fulfilled, "He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth."

Now in dwelling thus strongly on the clear evidence there exists for the prevalence of miraculous gifts as the endowment of the Church at Corinth, we must be prepared to face the objec-

tion which will not improbably take the form of, "After all, what do miracles prove?" And here we may at once frankly admit, that miracles, merely as miracles, of course prove nothing. An event might at any moment occur, conceivably, which would at once be recognised as so remarkable and so contrary to all recorded experience as to admit of being fairly called miraculous; but the mere occurrence of it would prove nothing. If, on the other hand, it occurred in conjunction with the word or promise of some person who appealed to it, or who professedly used it to confirm what he said, we may repudiate the inference as stoutly as we will, but it is perfectly certain that all reasonable and ordinary men would accept it as a valid and obvious confirmation of the word spoken, or the promise given. It would be simply irresistible to the ordinary judgment of reasonable beings.

In like manner if, as a matter of fact, it were seen that a large body of men, professing belief in Jesus, were endowed upon confessing His Name with powers like those which were possessed by the Church at Corinth, and upon the invocation of that Name were able to perform deeds which were manifestly beyond the natural powers of man to perform, it would be simply impossible to resist the additional force which, from that circumstance, those actions would derive, as well as the apparent confirmation of the fact that

some unknown virtue was inherent in the Name, or in the Person possessing it, which would be derived from the actions. And if the question at issue were simply the truth or falsehood, the reality or unreality, of the Person named, no sane man could, for a moment, hesitate to decide what the effect produced by such actions would be. They would, then, assume the form of a recognition of His reality and truth, which would carry with it nothing less than a Divine significance.

Now this was the question, and the only question at issue at the time. The abstract possibility of the miracles, as miracles, was not then debated; the question of their precise scientific value was not then raised. The legitimate effect, therefore, of the miracles witnessed is to be determined only by their relation to the question then at issue; and as this relation is a constant and unchanging, because an historical, relation, so the actual testimony borne by the miracles, is one which is wholly unaffected by the introduction subsequently of any questions which neither were, nor could be, then entertained.

In other words, the confirmatory value of any signs, supposed to be miracles, is independent of their absolute right to be so regarded, setting aside collusion, if at the time the question turns upon the truth or falsehood of the thing confirmed, and not upon the abstract nature of the signs themselves. To the omniscience of the

Almighty a miracle is of necessity a non-existent thing, but its mission and office is none the less valid among those to whom it is sent, and for the purpose for which it is sent. If we were possessed of Divine intelligence, we should understand "all" the "mysteries" of the gifts of healing, tongues, and prophecy bestowed upon the Church at Corinth, but these gifts would not the less remain as permanent witnesses to the truth of that which they were intended to confirm.

Nor is it otherwise now that we are not possessed of this intelligence; for these three points are clear, and admit of no dispute. First, that extraordinary, not to call them miraculous, gifts were possessed by the first Christians; secondly, that they were not possessed by all, nor by any, it would seem, at will, which, therefore, excludes the possibility of imposture or collusion; and thirdly, that they were possessed by none who did not acknowledge Jesus as Lord; implying thereby a belief in His Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, and who had not received the gift of conscious possession of the Holy Spirit which was commonly bestowed upon the public profession of the name of Jesus made at Baptism. These three points admit, I believe, of absolute and conclusive proof from the known writings of St. Paul, and, if allowed, they constitute a chain of evidence in support of the main features of the Gospel History, as actually true, which may, doubtless, and

without exaggeration, be termed little short of demonstrative.

Well might the Apostle, then feeling, as he did, the impregnable strength of his position, say to the Christians at Corinth, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Here was the secret of his influence. He had not only shown it to them, but they likewise had seen it, and he knew that they had seen it, and could neither deny nor be willing to deny that they had seen it. And this witness, if it lasted but for a few short years, or for a single generation, was nevertheless a witness which must of necessity in its effects last for ever. Confirmation of a story such as this, once given, was given for a period of time as long as the world should last. If it was once valid, nothing could ever invalidate it. St. Paul himself might rank it lower than the evidence of "charity," but it was nevertheless a kind of evidence in its degree substantial and true, and in its place serviceable; and, moreover, a kind of evidence to which he himself, as here and elsewhere, did not hesitate to appeal.

And the time might come, if, indeed, it has not already come, when men professing eagerly to accept his position of the pre-eminence of love would be willing to abandon altogether that supernatural revelation without which love itself

is in danger of degenerating from a Divine afflatus to a mere human sentiment, and the mission of the Apostle, no less than the very Gospel which he preached, becomes a delusion and an unreality.

Whether or not, then, by saying in "demonstration of the Spirit and of power," St. Paul meant directly to refer to the manifestation of spiritual gifts of an extraordinary character that accompanied his preaching, certain it is that it was so accompanied, which would of itself constitute such an appeal whether or not it was so employed. In fact, miraculous gifts would be absolutely useless if they were not such an appeal to the senses and to the reason of mankind. We must beware, therefore, seeing the evidence for their existence is as strong as it is, lest we reflect upon the wisdom and providence of the Almighty in allowing them to exist, if we deny to them their rightful place among the confirming testimonies of His Gospel.

At the same time we can scarcely be too earnest or emphatic in our protest against the mistake of supposing that the mere intellectual belief of miracles as a fact, or the mere sentiment of wonder at their performance, or at the authentic record of it, is in any sense identical with that spiritual manifestation and exercise of faith which the Gospel demands. If we could prove with the elaborate and minute precision of mathematical demonstration all the main points of the Christian

creed, the effect produced would not be Christian Faith. For that is declared by St. Paul to have its basis and foundation, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

It is not by any tower raised with never so much architectural skill, artistic beauty, and scientific accuracy, upon an intellectual plain of Shinar, that we can aspire to scale the summits of Divine belief; for the higher we ascend, the higher still the vault of heaven will appear, more and more unapproachable as our work becomes less sure, and our efforts more feeble; it is only by first rising by one act of dauntless but submissive faith to the throne of the Almighty, and to the Christ who sits thereon, that we can hope by painful efforts and by slow degrees to draw down, without destroying it, the spiritual apprehension of the great facts of faith to the level of a corresponding appreciation of the facts of human experience and the physical laws of earth. Our senses, and the disciplined powers of our natural reason, assure us of the latter, but of the former it is the special function of the Divinely illumined spirit to take cognisance. A spirit thus illumined is even more certain of these than of the others, but their foundation is in Heaven, and not upon the earth. If their foundation were on earth, our faith might hope to stand in the wisdom of men; as it is, it must be content to stand, and to stand only, in the power of God.

The enticing words of human wisdom may construct a fair-seeming and attractive, but it will be an insecure and an insufficient, foundation; for "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus," and He ever was and always will be "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness;" to those, on the one hand, who are bent upon mere practical achievement, and to those, on the other, who are captivated by the subtleties of an acute and accomplished intellect. We cannot disguise it from ourselves that here the Gospel must ever be regarded on the one hand as "a stumbling-block," and on the other as "foolishness." We do not deny that many of its greatest triumphs are to be found in both classes, but not as long as they who exhibit them remain exclusively of either.

Lastly, in conclusion, it may be needful to make mention of one objection which may possibly be taken to the line of argument now pursued. It may be said that while the phenomena in the Church at Corinth must be recognised as actually occurring, they are to be explained as special effects of very strong faith in the Christians, but by no means can be held to prove the reasonableness of that faith or the truth of it. No one can question the tenacity with which they held their belief: the question is whether the belief was sound, and whether these acknowledged pheno-

mena showed it to be so, or to what extent they showed it.

But, surely, if the premises are honestly admitted, there is but one conclusion possible. No strong personal belief in the possession of particular gifts, such as these are assumed to be, could put a man in possession of them. No man could speak with tongues, or prophesy, or heal the sick, by the mere indulgence of a very strong belief that he could do so. The first attempt would surely be sufficient to convince him of failure; or if not to convince him, at least to convince others. And however strong a man's own faith might be, he could never be sure of the faith of others,—an element in this case not one whit less indispensable.

But, in fact, to adopt such a theory is to prove oneself altogether ignorant of the nature of this Christian faith; it is to confound it with something totally opposite, and indeed absolutely fatal to it, which is the spirit of self-confidence and worldly assurance. Now the essence of Christian faith consisted in distrust of self and confidence in another. And it was only in proportion as this confidence in another was devoid of any trust or joy in self, that it was complete or efficient. Consequently, if mighty works were wrought by such a faith when perfect, they were a proof not of any thing in the person working them, but of the power of Him in whose Name they were

wrought. They were witnesses to His reality and truth; and while they were, indeed, tokens which indicated great faith in those working them, they showed that they were also free from all confidence in self, for had they not been they could not have wrought them. The evidence of this is St. Paul's own confession, "When I am weak, then am I strong," and the words which he received from the Lord Jesus, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

To sum up, then, what has been said. These writings are not disputed. They were the work of St. Paul, occasioned by the necessities of the time. They contain manifest allusions to certain gifts which were a peculiar feature in the Church at Corinth. They contain directions for the regulation and management of these gifts. Their tendency is to disparage them, rather than to overestimate their importance. They show, likewise, that the possession of these gifts in the body was no guarantee for purity of moral conduct in other members of the body, or even in the same. This is at once an evidence of genuineness in the writings, and of the reality of the gifts, which could not be disputed even where the moral conduct of the possessor did not wholly command respect. The exercise of these gifts, which were of various kinds, and susceptible likewise of nice distinctions, is such as cannot be accounted for

upon the supposition of mistake, imposture, or collusion, each of which is precluded by a due consideration of all the circumstances. It is such also as points conclusively to the operation of an entirely unknown and unexplained and inexplicable, if we may not call it a supernatural, power, which was never put forth but where there was a sincere and *bonâ fide* recognition of Jesus Christ as Lord; which implied a knowledge of and belief in the fact of His ignominious death on the Cross, His burial and resurrection from the dead the third day, as well as His ascension into heaven, and the outpouring of a new and hitherto unknown influence or agency called the Holy Spirit upon baptism in His Name and the public profession of Him, but which was not put forth in all cases, nor in any case at all times: thus pointing, therefore, to a discriminating power which was capable of deciding when it was put forth, and so making the hypothesis of self-deception the more hopelessly untenable. The exercise of these gifts also was such that it not only could not be referred to a spirit of ignorant and overweening self-confidence in the persons exercising them, but that any vestige of this spirit would have been absolutely fatal to it, at least in the first instance. The sole condition upon which they could be exercised was that of absolute and unshaken faith in Jesus. When the soul sustained itself wholly and entirely on the invisible, then

strange and inexplicable works were wrought, or marvellous gifts were exercised.

What, then, are the only possible conclusions that we can draw? They are these two; either the spirit of lies and falsehood was doing his best to cheat, deceive, and impose upon the men of that generation, and through them upon all the generations of mankind as long as the world shall last; or else the Spirit of Truth was actually and in very deed putting forth upon the plastic souls of men, and the subject forces of nature, such a manifestation of Divine and supernatural power as might serve for a recognition of the Name of Jesus, and as a confirmation to all time of the truth of the Gospel which was preached through Him.

NOTE.—Dr. Davidson's explanation of the phenomena in the Church at Corinth is as follows:—"The excitement produced upon susceptible spirits by a new religion in the apostolic age was often powerful and extraordinary." Introd. to N. T. i. 53. Had he said "by *the* new religion," it would have been strictly true; but, as it is, we may perhaps be allowed to ask, Whether any instance can be given of the same excitement being produced at that time by any *other* religion? and, Whether a *new* religion could produce such results now?

LECTURE VI

THE MORAL TEACHING OF ST. PAUL

1 Cor. vi. 19, 20

"*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*"

THE conclusion arrived at in our last Lecture went to show that there was so much evidence in favour of extraordinary results following a particular profession or belief, in the gifts bestowed upon the Church at Corinth, that for any ordinary mind it was difficult to rest merely in the bare fact without endeavouring to account for it. As a well-attested and unquestionable fact, the profession of a certain faith was attended with certain marvellous results. It is not enough to say that those results were the natural consequences of the faith, because it is plain that at the time they were seen to be different from such natural consequences, or they would not have been distinguished from them as they were.

Being, then, *not* natural, there are two courses

open to us. We must either leave them unexplained, and say, "I cannot account for them;" the course, doubtless, which many, now-a-days, would adopt; or we must do as St. Paul did, and say, they were evidence of a Holy Spirit at work on the bodies and souls of men, and controlling the operations of nature for some purpose of His own, and apparently for a testimony to man. The only other alternative, of an evil spirit working in this way, is so preposterous as to need no reference; but it may be requisite to notice, briefly, the common tendency there is to leave the matter as an unexplained phenomenon which we do not care to investigate, feeling that it is altogether beyond us.

This by many would be held to be the only scientific method to adopt. But surely if science is to be regarded as that which desires to know the reasons of things, rather than remain in ignorance of them, we may fairly question whether this course would be, strictly speaking, scientific. Science, it must be remembered, can give *no* account of this matter. The evidence upon which it has come down to us, and which is shown to be unimpeachable, as far as the fact is concerned, gives us also the reason for the fact. That is, the fact and the reason assigned for it stand precisely upon the same footing as regards evidence. It is not proposed to reject the one; why, then, reject the other?

The Apostle, at all events, laying claim, as he constantly does, to an exceptional revelation, says, that the gifts in question were instances of "the manifestation of the Spirit;" that it was "the same God who wrought them all in all[1];" and writing to the Galatians, he asks, "He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith[2]?" showing, therefore, that the exercise of these gifts was contingent on the knowledge and profession of faith, that it was the preaching of faith, and that alone, which produced them.

The question, then, to be decided is, Whether it is wiser to assign no reason, or to accept the one assigned? Upon the abstract wisdom we may perhaps be excused for declining to pronounce; but this much is certain, that it is more consistent with the plain spirit and teaching of these Epistles to accept the reason assigned; if, indeed, we may not question whether any other course would not be altogether contrary to that teaching and irreconcilable with it. That is to say, that unless we allow there was a manifestation of Divine power, an operation of the Holy Spirit in the extraordinary gifts of the Corinthian Christians, we must at least in common equity deny also that the Apostle had any special authority for the Gospel which he preached, that he was justified

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 7, 6. [2] Gal. iii. 5.

in appealing as he did to the authority which the Lord had given him [3], in speaking of "the abundance of the revelations [4]" vouchsafed to him, in calling himself "the Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God [5]," in saying that he had "seen Jesus Christ our Lord [6]" and the like, for we know not where to stop, but his own hypothetical paradox is established and his "preaching is vain," and he is "found a false witness of God; because" among many others he has "testified" *these* things "of God [7]."

Yea, more, is it not also certain that if God did not speak by the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, assuming their existence to be proved, so neither did He speak by the ordinary gifts of love, joy, peace, and the like. Now it is not denied that He spoke by these latter, neither is it denied that, supposing them to have existed, He did speak in a certain sense by the former; for if they existed they were in some sense revelations, indications, albeit exceptional, of the will, or at least the working, of God. But if it is allowed that God spoke by them at all, then it cannot for a moment be a matter of question as to what He said by them.

The object, therefore, at which we shall have to aim in our present argument begins to be fairly

[3] 2 Cor. x. 8.
[4] 2 Cor. xii. 7.
[5] 1 Cor. i. 1. 2 Cor. i. 1.
[6] 1 Cor. ix. 1; xv. 8.
[7] 1 Cor. xv. 14, 15.

conspicuous. We must try to show that *the moral teaching and tendency of St. Paul's writings is itself a confirmation of his own supernatural claims, and also an evidence of the source and origin of these particular gifts.* He himself appealed to "the signs of an Apostle which were wrought among the Corinthians in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds[8]." Here the natural and the supernatural are mixed together; either taken alone is insufficient, both taken together are conclusive; but more than this, one is a voucher for the other.

For it cannot be denied that taking these four Epistles of St. Paul as specimens of the doctrine which he taught, and as indications of the general tone of morality prevalent in the Churches of his time, the influence of the Gospel had been of a most purifying and beneficial character. That there were no cases of a lower standard of morality is of course not affirmed, but these were manifestly exceptional, and, altogether, the preaching of the Gospel had doubtless been attended with a very conspicuous improvement in the morality of those who had received it. This is a fact at once so certain and so obvious as to need and to admit of no proof[9].

Was, then, this great improvement in morality, this higher elevation in the moral conscience of mankind, which was the immediate effect of the

[8] 2 Cor. xii. 12.

[9] 1 Cor. vi. 11.

preaching of the Gospel, an evidence of its being of the nature of God, correspondent with His attributes, as our natural reason tells us those attributes must exist, and, therefore, so far Divine, or the reverse? Did this show it to have come from the kingdom of Light or from the kingdom of Darkness? The question can receive but one possible answer. The lives of St. Paul's converts proved them to have been under an influence which was like that of a holy and good God. The moral evidence of a Divine origin was as strong as it could be, certainly stronger as a matter of historical fact than any other religion professing to come with Divine authority has ever been able to present.

So far, then, it cannot be denied that this preaching of Jesus Christ was attended with results which bespoke an influence not other than Divine, an influence which to the extent that it was beyond the power of man's ordinary nature to produce it, was an indication of a Divine assistance, albeit acting naturally.

But, now, conjointly with these purely moral results, which of themselves would show nothing more than a pure origin, we find other results likewise, of a physical or of a spiritual character, which in their mode of operation were undoubtedly not natural; and these results were confined to a smaller area than the simply moral results, but still an area which was limited exclusively to the

limits of the larger area, so that no instance was discovered beyond those limits among persons not professing belief in Jesus.

And, furthermore, it is not denied that so far as these result were real, they also would be indications of the working of some Divine law, if that law were only known or could be ascertained; while, as regards St. Paul, to whose writings we are mainly indebted for our knowledge of them, they were distinctly ascribed by him to the operation of that same Spirit to whom all must allow that whatever was pure and of good repute in the morals of the Christians was justly ascribed.

What, then, appears to be the only possible inference, except that so far as these results were natural they were the working of the Spirit of God; and so far as they were beyond nature, whether or not they were capable of being brought within the limits of the operation of any law known or unknown, they were, likewise, the working of the Spirit of God alone? If, then, it is to be allowed that the Almighty is able to hold direct communication with His creature man, or to speak to him through His works, in such a manner as to make them the channels for conveying a knowledge of His will, it would seem that here we have sufficient cause to believe that He has really done so.

But, again, we may go even closer to the question really at issue, and say that if upon the

invocation of the Name of Jesus certain strange results followed, such as works of healing, prophecy, or the like, for the performance of which He had been invoked, there were only two possible ways in which such works could be interpreted; they must either be denied as to their reality, or must be accepted as signs from Him of the power inherent in His Name. In like manner we may deny them now if we please, but in proportion as we admit them to have been real, it is difficult in that proportion not to accept them as signs from Him.

We all know the kind of revulsion of feeling with which we instinctively recoil when we are thus confronted with any supernatural phenomenon that seems to come charged with a message from the invisible world. Perhaps we condemn it as sensational and vulgar to attempt to work in such a way upon our feelings or our reason. But it either is or is not a fact that messages of this kind have been sent. If it is not a fact it would be wise and reasonable to resolve ourselves to that effect; but if it is, then there is no course open to us but fairly and honestly to face it and reverently to lay to heart the meaning and significance of the message. It is no valid objection to raise against evidence of this kind to say that it is open to great and manifold abuse, and has been prodigiously abused; for that is patent on the face of history, and, indeed, the

very evidence we have been appealing to was only elicited by what was in fact a remonstrance against such abuses; but the possible abuse of any thing furnishes no argument against the proper use of it; and the mere existence of shams and counterfeits, however common they may be, proves not that there is nothing real, but, on the contrary, the great scarceness and value of the reality which of itself occasions the existence of so many counterfeits. It would not be worth while to imitate were it not for the hope and prospect of imposing upon those who are seeking for what is real.

Now in the case of St. Paul and the Corinthian Church, we have the strongest evidence we can have of this reality. For not only is there the utmost purity of morals inculcated on the one hand, and pursued on the other—a purity the necessity for which is enunciated in the most solemn terms, "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" (nothing short of an actual and special indwelling of Almighty God, is advanced as the basis of this new and rectified morality)—but also the profession of spiritual belief which accompanied it, was attended at least in his case, and probably also in theirs, certainly in the case of others, if not in theirs, with sufferings and dangers, ignominy and shame; all of which might have been avoided if the beloved Name of Jesus had not been held so precious as to

be worth the price even of liberty and life. Now it is not too much to say that had the Apostle known he was believing a lie, this could not have been the case; but Is it also too much to say that the very fact of its being so, combined with the Divine purity of his life, and supported by the strange testimony of the marvellous and extraordinary spiritual gifts possessed by him, affords evidence which, fairly estimated, is not other than conclusive, not only of the wonderful strength of his own faith, but, more than this, that what he believed was true? For it was the witness of Jesus Christ in him, a witness which to those who will receive it is valid and unalterable for all time.

And while we insist upon the sublimity of the Apostle's moral teaching, as tending of itself to confirm the reality of the strange and unusual gifts in the possession of the Church; and as there was professedly but one origin for both, as tending likewise to show the nature of that common origin; we must remember also that his teaching was not merely moral, but that it contained an element which was prior to the morality, and in fact the source of it. For this also is undeniable, that the belief preached was not the offshoot of the morality, but the morality the natural fruit of the belief. The morality which is every where so conspicuous is that of which our Lord had said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." And so in the very passage now before

us, even when St. Paul is urging the imperative necessity for personal holiness and purity, he does so by enforcing the two considerations, first, "Your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost," and secondly, "Ye are bought with a price." Now we know that this last, though second in order, had been the first inculcated. It was upon the consciousness of redemption that the indwelling of the Spirit ensued. It was the message of the Cross that the Apostle had come to Corinth proclaiming. It was "Jesus Christ and the One crucified," saving whom he had "determined to know nothing among them."

Now what did this imply in the first place, and what did it involve in the second? What does it show us about his teaching, and what inference may we draw therefrom upon the subject in hand? Let us inquire, then, what were the primary elements in the Gospel which St. Paul preached? He proclaimed the fact of the death of Christ upon the Cross[1]. He proclaimed this as the death of the Son of God[2], for he proclaimed it as the death of One who had the power of imparting the Holy Spirit[3], who of God was made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption[4], in order that glorying in Him we might glory in the Lord, who was nothing less than the wisdom and

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 2.
[2] Rom. viii. 3.
[3] Rom. viii. 9.
[4] 1 Cor. i. 30.

the power of God[5], who was the common centre of all Christian society, in whom all Christians had their common standing[6], and who with God the Father was the joint source of all Christian grace[7].

Moreover, he proclaimed this death as a death for sin[8], "for our sins;" as the Divinely appointed means through which we receive the remission of sins, so that in some mysterious way God's forgiveness, and our sins, met in the death of Christ; that the blood of Christ was the mercy-seat of grace[9] where we might find a gracious God; that His death for the ungodly, while commending God's love towards us[1], was the reconciliation of man to God, so that we might even joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we had received that atonement or reconciliation[2] which our very nature wanted, and for which it yearned and thirsted, albeit perchance unconsciously.

And in addition to these redemptive consequences of Christ's death it was, according to the message delivered by Paul, to all who thus received it, the gate of a new life; they began life anew upon a fresh foundation, with new and infinite hopes, having made a *tabula rasa* of the past, and having received through Christ the spring and impulse of

[5] 1 Cor. i. 24. [6] 1 Cor. xii. 12, 27.
[7] Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. i. 2; xiii. 14. Gal. i. 3.
[8] 1 Cor. xv. 3. Rom. iii. 25. [9] Rom. iii. 25.
[1] Rom. v. 8. [2] Rom. v. 11.

eternal life [3]; a life without condemnation [4] because without sin, and without regret or sorrow [5] because full of deep and abiding peace, which had in itself the antidote to all earthly tribulation, or distress, or persecution, to famine and nakedness, and peril, and sword.

Now we are warranted in saying that this is not a perverted or *ex parte* statement of the Gospel which Paul preached, but that it was thus received by thousands as well as thus proclaimed by him. These are some of the more manifest and conspicuous features of it which are continually reappearing with invariable sameness. And from this fact we are warranted in saying that as sin was the one antagonistic principle with which this Gospel came into most determined opposition, so it was but natural that wherever it came the manifestations of sin would more or less disappear. In proportion as the work of the Gospel was complete it would completely disappear; and if it was not actually abolished, this must be attributed not to the feebleness of the opposition offered to it by the Gospel, but to weakness in the recipients thereof.

Now we may without hesitation challenge every one to say how far it seems to him that, in *theory*, falsehood is consistent with the Gospel, thus presented? Is it not self-evident that nothing is or

[3] 2 Cor. v. 17. [4] Rom. viii. 1.

[5] Rom. viii. 31—39.

can be more opposed to it? Is it not certain that falsehood of character and conduct is precisely one of those very things which any foe to the Gospel would instinctively seize upon as invalidating, or, at least, as inconsistent with, any man's profession of it? And though, verily, it is too much to argue from this circumstance that all professors of the Gospel must of necessity be true, yet for all that we may with justice affirm that no less is it too much to assume at the outset that one of the first and certainly the greatest preacher of it was necessarily false.

To reason, therefore, as if there were that in the main features of the Gospel which would utterly vitiate it as a presentment of Divine truth, and stamp it as inherently and radically false, would be about as flagrant an instance of *petitio principii* as it is well possible to conceive. But, beyond all question, if it was not a fact that Jesus died and rose again, then the Gospel which Paul thus preached was inherently false. And for what was a lie thus to produce the known fruits of truth, purity, and holiness would be scarcely less absurd to imagine than it would be, in fact, impossible. And, beyond all question, if it was not a fact that the Jesus whom Paul preached not only was capable of working the mighty works ostensibly wrought in His Name, but that He actually did work them; that He not only possessed a power greater than human, which, there-

fore, if not Divine, must be that of a Person *in alliance with Deity*, but that He actually and visibly did exercise it, then the Gospel which Paul preached was inherently false. And, beyond all question, if it was not a fact that the strange spiritual gifts which manifestly were possessed by Paul and the Corinthian Church were, as he led the members of that Church to suppose, and as they believed, in some way connected with and wholly dependent on the sincerity of belief in Jesus, and a power resident in His Name, then also the Gospel which Paul preached was inherently and radically false, it was unsound and rotten at the core; it was mixed up with lies, and based upon a lie.

We are, therefore, justified in saying that the very nature of the doctrine which Paul preached, inculcating as it did exceptional purity of life, affords ground for a presumption that the framework upon which he based it was inherently sound and true; and this presumption strengthens to a moral certainty in proportion as we find him advancing the claims of the Gospel on the ground of its being true and the truth of God. It becomes, then, absolutely impossible to admit in ever so small a degree any supposition of deliberate falsehood or substantial unsoundness in the message delivered. It is monstrous to assume that he who brought it as the capital charge against the heathen, that they had "changed the

truth of God into a lie[6]," and threatened "indignation and wrath" "to them who did not obey truth[7]," and came every where in the Name of God, and as the professed bearer of Divine authority, should nevertheless be found with a lie in his right hand. And yet this is most certainly the case upon any one of the suppositions above named; and the legitimate inference to be drawn from these considerations is not that in dealing with St. Paul's Gospel we must accept all or nothing (however true this may be), but that there is in it a something which being denied all is denied.

Now, in the present day, it is especially necessary to bear this in mind, because in certain quarters it is tacitly assumed that we may, in the main, receive with a certain amount of respect and deference the writings of this Apostle, and yet hold ourselves loose to the absolute truth of the statements they contain, and altogether repudiate doctrines which are an integral and essential part of them. Whereas if these considerations are of any weight, it becomes sufficiently manifest that such a course is wholly untenable. We may reject these writings if we please; but, professing to accept them as the genuine productions of St. Paul, it is not possible to face the considerations they suggest and the facts they necessarily imply, and not be constrained to confess that

[6] Rom. i. 25. [7] Rom. ii. 8.

they bear evidence to an extraordinary, if not a supernatural, confirmation of a definite belief as being in itself according to truth, and as having special Divine sanction[8]; and when we estimate them fairly as the honest record of the Apostle's own mind and history, it becomes no less impossible not to see that he himself remains to this day as it were a living witness to the truth of Jesus.

The phenomena of St. Paul's life and character, as depicted in his writings alone, are such as to baffle the most dexterous ingenuity to account for them except upon the one hypothesis that the Gospel which he preached was true. Jesus was a living personal influence, not the mere abiding memory of a past existence, but an omnipotent and Divine Person who wrought upon the spirit and conduct of St. Paul as the Creator alone can work upon the creature.

Thus far, then, we have been led to see that the very nature of the faith which Paul proclaimed, implied and demanded truth, and not falsehood, in the person proclaiming it. He could not from the nature of the case have been the herald of un-

[8] It is to be observed that this is a position very different from that, whether tenable or untenable, which maintains the verbal infallibility of all that St. Paul ever wrote. He may at times have spoken "as a man," and yet have given a perfectly faithful and accurate transcript of the Gospel which was committed unto him. Cf. 1 Cor. vii. 12; xv. 3.

truths; for had he been, the results, no less than the character and tendency of his teaching, would have been different from what they were. But may we not go farther, and say that there was that in the nature of the truth proclaimed which was specially calculated to cherish and beget truth in him who delivered, and in those who received it?

Perhaps there is nothing which is a surer test of a man's personal morality than the degree in which all that he says and does is characterised by truth. There is an inherent insincerity and disregard of truth conspicuous in some men, a habit of misrepresentation, and a tendency to exaggerate, in short, a failure to perceive and appreciate truth, a carelessness about adhering strictly to the limits of actuality, which every one must have encountered from time to time.

Now the fatal consequences of this tendency, which appears to be innate in some persons, are nowhere more evident than in the distrust which invariably accompanies it. We never feel sure how much we may believe of any thing that they say. There is an uncertainty and an ambiguity about it all. And yet, perhaps, it may be very hard to fix upon it the imputation of actual untruth. We cannot say that they have told a lie; but somehow or other the impression produced is a false one.

Now such a character as this is essentially im-

moral: it is radically unsound, whether it is exhibited in insincere expressions of friendship or in any other way. The code of public opinion and of custom may indeed prevent the commission of notorious breaches of faith, or infringements of propriety; but such persons are nevertheless immoral, and can never become great teachers of moral and spiritual truth—they are morally disqualified for being so. The two things are incongruous and incompatible.

Not only, therefore, may we say that the like habit of not appreciating truth would have been absolutely fatal to the Apostle's usefulness as a teacher, but also that the manifest spirituality of his teaching, and its elevated moral character, must have had the effect of developing the truthfulness of his nature, and of rendering him yet more sensitive to the requirements of truth, and yet more scrupulous in fulfilling them.

And so likewise with all to whom he came, who were brought under the influence of his teaching. The direct result of that teaching must have been to stimulate a regard for truth, and to make men more alive to the grave responsibility of adhering to it. As far, therefore, as St. Paul's message was received, its very reception acted as an additional restraint upon any divergence from truth. On every ground, therefore, we are precluded from supposing that the message was in any degree a false one as to the facts concerning Christ which

it proclaimed, or the statements it involved concerning the nature of the spiritual gifts, and the source from whence they were derived.

The high moral character and intense spirituality of the teaching was an evidence of truth; the requirements of truth demanded that there should be no misrepresentation in the substantive matter of what was taught; and if there was no misrepresentation conscious or unconscious in this, then the conclusion is inevitably forced upon us, that belief in the Name of Jesus was the means by which the spiritual gifts were exercised, and that they were allowed to be exercised in confirmation of the truth of the facts related concerning Christ, and as proof of a superhuman and supernatural power resident in Him.

That is to say, the due consideration of the facts presented by the acknowledged writings of St. Paul compels us to admit the existence of very strong evidence for the exercise of supernatural powers by himself and others. These supernatural powers, if exercised, could only have been derived, as they are uniformly said to have been derived, from belief in Jesus Christ; but that belief alone, if based upon a falsehood, would not have been adequate to bestowing them, and for collateral reasons we see that there is strong evidence of its truth, judging from the fruits produced by it. But if the belief in Jesus Christ was a true belief, and the results produced by it were really super-

natural, then there is only one conclusion possible, which is, to refer the supernatural gifts to Jesus. It was He who wrought those mighty works which were wrought by those who believed in His Name. It was He who produced the strange results which were produced in them.

The only question, then, which can arise is, What was the exact position, indicated by those mighty works, of Him in whose Name they were wrought? Was He possessed of a power superior to that of man, or was His power altogether and exclusively Divine? Now the idea of this power being exercised independently, and in defiance of the Divine will, may be considered as precluded; the notion of some intermediate and independent power of this kind moving in an orbit athwart that of the Divine operation is simply absurd. If it was exercised at all it was plainly exercised with the Divine concurrence. And the Divine assent was given to any statement or doctrine which was implicitly ratified and confirmed thereby. God set His seal to the facts and truths proclaimed. And if Jesus was proclaimed as the Son of God, and the bearer of a special mission from God, then beyond all question the seal of God was set to this proclamation. God thereby acknowledged Him as His Son, and as the bearer of a special Divine mission in which the righteousness and truth of God were implicated.

This would, at least, be a reasonable inference

from the premises assumed, on the single hypothesis that a Divinely authenticated communication is not impossible. But we cannot disguise from ourselves the utter insufficiency of such a case to meet the requirements of those who are disposed to doubt—of those who are determined to rest only upon what is demonstrably proven; though at the same time we must maintain that it is not possible to afford such a resting-place for faith; if it were so, faith would be no more faith.

But on the other hand, it is not fair to demand so much of those who believe and would give a reason for the hope which is in them. For faith rests not upon demonstrable, but upon probable, evidence. Faith is the conclusion to which the reason must *jump*, and to which it jumps not unreasonably, upon the due consideration of many and converging probabilities. These point us to one conclusion, which we may accept or reject as we please: if we accept it, we accept it upon faith; and if we reject it, we reject it more unreasonably than we should accept it.

Farther than this it is not possible to go; the only additional element which remains to be considered is one which has necessarily no weight with the unbeliever; namely, this—the ample and conclusive confirmation of the truth believed, which is wrought by the Spirit of God in the mind upon conversion. The universal necessity of such conversion was openly taught by Christ; that is, He

did not consider it possible to have without conversion the amount of evidence which would be granted upon conversion. Up to a certain point the evidence is the same for all alike, beyond that point it is overwhelming in the one case, that of the converted, but nugatory in the other. It never has been otherwise, and it never can be otherwise. Putting the case that miracles were actually and visibly wrought by Christ, and wrought in confirmation of certain doctrines, it is obvious that both the doctrines and the miracles must have been rejected upon the principles of Hume, but so they were upon the principles of the Pharisees and the Sadducees who witnessed them. What was evidence sufficient for one class of minds—a Peter, Paul, or John—was insufficient for another. We must face that fact. Putting the case that the miracles were wrought, *that* upon our premises was enough, the inferences we draw are legitimate; but let no one, in the opposite case, suppose that it ever would have been otherwise with *him:* had he himself even been a witness of the miracles he would still have been an unbelieving witness, and the fault lies not with us who can produce no more evidence, but with him, who, upon the production of twice as much, would still disbelieve.

But then the affections come in just where the operations of the intellect stop short. It is the love and the loving death of the miracle-Worker,

and not the miracles which He works, that lead the heart, and therewith lead the whole man, captive[9]. "Ye are bought with a price," the price being the blood of Jesus—the blood of God: it is that which is the all-prevailing motive—"The love of Christ constraineth us." If we can be drawn to believe that the death of Christ was the measure of the love of *God* for us, that God, through His blood, spoke love unutterable to our hearts, then we shall have no difficulty in believing that the same God could and would work miracles in nature if necessary, as well as miracles in Grace, for us. And of this the necessity would be measured not by antecedent considerations, but by the fact as testified by evidence. The belief in the love through death itself furnishes an antecedent consideration stronger than all.

Now it may perhaps be questioned, whether there is or can be fuller or more complete evidence for any miracles than is supplied by the acknowledged writings of St. Paul. It is evidence

[9] It is not, however, that the affections are allowed to bias the judgment, but the affections appeal with a force to the judgment that reason alone and of itself cannot command. The evidence is the same in both cases for the believer and the unbeliever; and it obviously falls, and must fall, short of demonstration; but this evidence prevails or not prevails according as it moves the affections as well as the intellect, or the intellect alone. The same action has a very different significance according as it is performed by an affectionate friend or by an unknown and indifferent person.

conveyed incidentally, undesignedly, and in such a way as to depreciate the importance of the miracles while establishing their existence as simple matters of fact. It is the evidence, moreover, not of a single individual, but of whole Churches, and even, in one case, of the unbelievers. It is evidence which is ratified and confirmed by the inculcation of the purest and most elevated doctrine. It is absolutely impossible to disprove this evidence, or to establish its insignificance.

But, then, admitting this evidence, as we are bound to do, it carries with it the whole framework of the Gospel history; it is itself conclusive and independent evidence of the fact of the Resurrection, for example, because, if the Resurrection had not been a fact, those things, to which the writings of St. Paul bear witness, would not and could not have happened. Large bodies of men might have believed a lie, but it is not possible that their belief in a lie, be it never so strong, could have enabled them to heal the sick, to speak with tongues, to prophesy, to incur reproach for the abuse of their gifts, and to lead a life of systematic and organised benevolence and purity, such as it is plain they led. Had the fundamental fact of their belief been false, these results would not have followed; but we have conclusive evidence that they did follow. The fair presumption then, nay, the only possible conclusion, is that the fact occurred, that these results were

among the first fruits and consequences of the fact, not of a belief in the fact, but of the very fact itself.

We are warranted, therefore, in claiming the evidence of miracles being wrought in the Corinthian Church as evidence for the truth of the Resurrection over and beyond that evidence which has been preserved to us by eye-witnesses. It is evidence of a testing and confirming nature. Such a belief as that of the first witnesses of the Resurrection, if based upon a lie, would rapidly spend itself, and be convicted of falsehood; least of all, would it take root in various centres, such as Rome, Corinth, and Galatia, each time with fresh and original vigour, and with varying though similar results. The thing is a moral impossibility. At least we may say thus much, That if the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus was a prominent feature and essential element in the belief of the Corinthian Church, and if, by belief in Jesus, as a living and Almighty Person, various members of that Church were able to perform certain works which could not otherwise be performed—if this was a well-authenticated fact, admitting neither of dispute nor doubt—then, most assuredly, we should be in possession of a chain of evidence, without a flaw, pointing distinctly to the one only possible conclusion, that the Lord Jesus Christ had risen from the dead, and was confirming the souls of the disciples by these signs following.

So far the operations of the intellect may carry us; but as Christians it is not possible to overlook the other branch of corroborative evidence which remains in reserve for *us*. If, as a matter of fact, Jesus Christ did rise from the dead, then, as a matter of fact, He is risen now and risen for all time. We can have no further evidence of an historical kind than we already possess. To make fresh researches and investigations into the mass of that evidence is a task beyond the reach of many and of most of us, however abundantly it may reward those who engage in it. But there is an abiding test which is within the reach of every one, and that is the test of experiment. "O taste and see that the Lord is gracious; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." If Christ is risen from the dead, He can prove His resurrection to those who require a proof. He will do so upon one condition, the condition, namely, of belief. "O taste and see." Believe and you shall know. Make the trial and be convinced. Apply the test of experiment and be converted. All we can do is to point out the nature of the ground, to show that it is solid and firm; but were it shown to be never so sure, you must still take the *leap of faith*, which alone can land you on the rock that is higher than you, the Rock of ages. Bear then, oh, bear with us, while we counsel you to take that leap, and then, assuredly, having taken it, shall Jesus

Christ, the risen Saviour, make known the power of His resurrection unto you, and confirm the souls of His new disciples by manifold signs following.

LECTURE VII

THE MISSION OF ST. PAUL

GAL. i. 1

"Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead."

I PURPOSE, in the present Lecture, to investigate the nature of St. Paul's Mission; to inquire in what sense, if in any sense, he was sent by God; by what credentials the Churches of Galatia must have recognised him as the bearer of a Divine message; on what grounds we ourselves may receive him as the messenger of God; how his credentials are or were on the one hand sufficient, as fully substantiating his claims, and on the other exclusive, as not pertaining to others who might presume to advance the same or similar claims.

In order to obtain an answer to these questions we must endeavour to transport ourselves as far as possible into the circumstances of the time, and to put ourselves in the position of those who were first confronted with St. Paul as a living

teacher. In conducting this inquiry it will be my aim to make as few assumptions as possible, indeed, to assume only that the Epistle to the Galatians was actually written by St. Paul, and had reference to real and existing circumstances. As this appears to be universally admitted, the right of assuming it can scarcely be denied by any.

It appears, then, on this assumption, that St. Paul addressed the Galatians, and had at one time been received by them, as an Apostle not sent from men, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who had raised Him from the dead. We have nothing to do now with the resurrection from the dead, nor with the particular act by which Paul was sent. All that on the assumption above-named is clear, is the fact that Paul claimed to have been sent in the manner described, and that at one time the Churches of Galatia had so received him. This, I think, cannot be denied. Before we deny it we must reject the Epistle as a forgery, not only in respect of its authorship, but also of its subject-matter; and against the latter supposition lies the weighty consideration that, if forged, the Epistle would necessarily relate to subjects which from their likeness to known subjects might have been real. In order to meet with any success as a forgery there must have been a certain resemblance between the circumstances described and those

which were known to have taken place. And, therefore, on the supposition even of forgery the evidence is scarcely less strong than on the assumption which we may say will be universally allowed, that the letter is authentic and the subject it treats of real.

This, then, being so, we may assert that the Galatians received St. Paul as a man bearing a Divine message, to use his own words, "as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus[1]." We have, then, to ask two questions: Why did *they* so receive him? and How did *he* know that he had a Divine message?

First, Why did they so receive him? To answer this question we have only the evidence of the Epistle itself. There was then, in the first place, the fact of his own conversion; that spoke powerfully to them, as indeed it does to every man that duly weighs it in all its bearings. They, like "the Churches of Judæa which were in Christ," "glorified God in him[2]," because, having been a persecutor in times past, he now preached the faith which once he destroyed. Again, there was the notorious fact that the body of Christians generally, even those Christians who had the advantage of priority compared with St. Paul, all acknowledged him as a Christian, and as a Christian teacher second to none. In proof of

[1] Gal. iv. 14. [2] Gal. i. 24.

this he could point to well-known circumstances that had occurred at Jerusalem and at Antioch. Again, there was the nature of the message delivered, which seemed to carry its own credentials with it, which was the story of "Jesus Christ evidently set forth crucified among them." This seemed in its very nature to be a sufficient guarantee for the truth of the man who bore it. All presumption seemed to be against the possibility of such a story being fabricated, to say nothing of the general notoriety of the fact which, however it was received, could not possibly be questioned.

But, beyond this there was another reason which appears, in the opinion of the Apostle, to outweigh almost any. "This only would I learn of you," he says, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith[3]?" Then they had themselves been the conscious subjects of an influence, the conscious recipients of a power which they had not known before, and which, but for the message of St. Paul, they had never known. They were themselves, therefore, witnesses to themselves of the truth of his message; there was that in them which told them it was true, which they could no more doubt than they could doubt the combined evidence of their senses, sight, hearing, and touch. One thing they knew, that whereas they had been blind, now

[3] Gal. iii. 2.

they saw; whereas they had been deaf, now they heard; whereas their powers of feeling had been dull, they were now acute. They had received in consequence of his message, the spirit of illumination, of emancipation, of righteousness and peace. Though this influence had been transient, it had yet been real. It was fresh in their memory, however it had been modified. They had spoken of their first acquaintance with Paul's message as nothing short of "blessedness." They would have plucked out their own eyes in gratitude, and have given them to him. It filled their whole nature with such a flood of light and bliss, that they could only recognise it as the work of Him who had given them that nature, and hail the human agent of it as sent by Him.

Nor was this all; there were mighty works wrought among themselves, which Paul knew and they knew, that confirmed the preaching of faith as an invention not of this world, but of One who held the world and all the powers of nature in the hollow of His hand; which as they were wrought for good ends, and had only a tendency to stimulate and urge to holiness, could only be traced to a holy source. For these various and converging reasons the Churches of Galatia had received the Apostle as one who came with authority from the Master whom he proclaimed. They could not but see that whoever that Master was, the claim of acting in His Name was fully substantiated by the

Apostle. He verified his own mission as far as the identification of his Master with that mission was concerned. There could be no mistake about the reality of the Master as far as it could be measured by the reality of the servant. Such is the evidence afforded by the Epistle itself.

The only question that could arise was about the reality of the Master. Perhaps this fervid and enthusiastic messenger might have been deceived. Other persons had come professing to work miracles, and apparently had wrought them in other names than that of Jesus. How could it be known that Jesus, if He wrought them by the hands of Paul, was any thing more than a hitherto unfamiliar name in the multitudinous Pantheon? The answer was because Paul had wrought other works besides miracles. He had done something more than impose upon the senses. He had led captive the heart, and had convinced the reason. He had wrought miracles not only before their eyes, but in themselves. The one might be questioned, the other could not. If he made them conscious of the living power of the living Jesus, there was a third witness independent of themselves, and independent of him. That living Person was His own witness, before whom Paul was nothing, and they were nothing. He was in fact, not a witness, but a judge; not the defendant put upon his trial, but the Supreme Lawgiver asserting His authority; the sole arbiter of con-

science, the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. If Jesus was this, the position which He held was a permanent one. It either was, or was not this; but, being this, it could never alter. It was independent of time, superior to change, unaffected and uninfluenced by opinion.

If it was this, then all the phenomena of the Pauline writings and the Pauline history are abundantly explained. Then we can understand the bold but novel assertion, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." But if it was not this, then not only such language becomes mysterious and unmeaning, but likewise the phenomena with which it is connected, and to which it bears an abiding witness. In one word the Apostle proved his Divine Mission by its Divine results. They were results which were not and could not be referred to him, which could not be referred to any human origin, which could only be referred to God.

On this point we apprehend there could be no question in the mind of the Galatians; it is, however, not only questioned, but denied now. The results are supposed to be natural or imaginary. Observe, then, if *they* were imaginary, we may in that case say that the *defection* in the Churches of Galatia was imaginary likewise; and then the very cause of this Epistle being written was imaginary. But if it was a fact that the Galatians

had fallen from grace, then it is a fact that they had once been under grace, that they had brought forth once the fruits of the Spirit, that they had evidenced in their hearts and lives the nature of the message they had received. For if not so, then we must assume two imaginary positions. First, that the immediate results produced by the Apostle's preaching were imaginary; and secondly, that the base defection by which they had been followed was imaginary too, and that the vehement outburst of apostolic indignation was uncalled for, and unseemly; that he was fighting as one that beateth the air, as one who striketh at an object in the dark, which either does not exist, or which, if it exists, cannot be found.

If, on the other hand, the results were natural, then it has still to be shown how it was they were so much opposed to nature, how, in the midst of heathenism, and a profligate and depraved idolatry, there sprung up suddenly a pure and elevated morality, a conception of the Divine nature, unequalled by the loftiest flights of philosophy, a consciousness of Divine mysteries and Divine realities till then unthought of, a recognised standard or ideal of human action till then unheard of and unattained, a sensitiveness of the moral nature which can never be surpassed, and which till then had never been imagined. This must have been a most unnatural freak of nature, a strange and monstrous exhibition of latent

natural power, directed moreover to the subjugation and overthrow of nature, and against the action of those very tendencies which we feel to be so natural within ourselves. Could nature have done this? If so, then Satan also might cast out Satan, and the kingdom be divided against itself, and yet not have an end.

Or if the first conversion of the Galatian Churches was a thing in the course of nature, the spontaneous result of natural causes working naturally, then What shall we say about the defection of those Churches, Was that natural or unnatural? Not unnatural, certainly; because, as a matter of fact, it did occur, and nothing which does occur can be unnatural, but yet so opposite to the previous natural work as to be called, in Apostolic language, a fall from grace. We are surely warranted in saying that if one was natural, to be referred to the ordinary operations of nature, then the other was most distinctly supernatural above and beyond nature, and so far contrary to nature.

But we must bear in mind that on the hypothesis of our adversaries, we are forbidden to assert that the conversion in point, so far as it did occur, was other than natural; that for some reason or other the result of the Apostle's preaching, as well as that preaching itself, was nothing more than might have been expected; that the life of St. Paul, and the existence of the Galatian

Church, and the production of this Epistle, were all alike phenomena happening in the course of nature, to be accounted for naturally, as the inevitable consequences of the correlation of moral and social forces in operation at the time. The absurdity of any theory like this to account for the origin of the Epistle to the Galatians, for example, is obvious on the bare mention of it. *The production of that Epistle, as a mere literary effort, was a phenomenon not to be accounted for on merely natural principles.* The tone of it was out of harmony with the voices of the world. The stream and current of it ran counter to that of the course of this world. In one mode of speech it was anomalous and inexplicable; in another it was supernatural.

And as with the Epistle to the Galatians so with the life of St. Paul, and the existence of the Galatian Church; indeed we are not left without the means of estimating the nature and degree of this difference. Take the case of the existence of any Christian in the present day, who is not merely in name a Christian, but also in heart and hope. He is a moral phenomenon, not to be explained on any natural principles, or accounted for by the operation of any natural causes. His life is based upon the supernatural, which, whether or not it has any existence in fact, is, at any rate in idea and belief, a force and influence sufficiently powerful to mould his character, and to

reconstitute his whole existence. He, like the Apostle, can say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God;" and the words in his mouth are not one whit more natural than they were in St. Paul's; they point unmistakably to a real but hidden motive power, capable of producing great effects—supernatural results; which, whether or not the assigned cause of it is true, at least has this peculiarity, that it acts *as if it were true* in the cause assigned.

There is no other known power capable of producing the same results. But these results are unmistakably produced on deathbeds, in affliction, sickness, and the like. The results must have a real cause, therefore the cause assigned is a real cause. The power producing the results is the power of Jesus; or, if Jesus is an unreality, it is the power of some one, or of something, which, *as* Jesus, does produce them. There is no denying, as there is no counterfeiting, the results; they are before our own eyes; and we cannot deny *them*, even if we deny the power producing them—they cannot be produced naturally; no natural causes are adequate to producing them; therefore they must be produced supernaturally.

Practically, therefore, we have each of us the power of testing the character of the source from whence the early Church derived its existence, for it must at all times have been identical with that

from whence the like results are now derived. The life of the believing Christian is a supernatural phenomenon; it points to the existence of a cause which is not to be seen, or touched, or handled; which is not to be discovered in the wide realms of nature. The very existence of the Epistle to the Galatians is a like phenomenon, and so also is the history of St. Paul.

You may dig deep down into the hills and valleys of earth, but can find there no perennial spring from whence these streams of living water can have been derived. But there is a river of which it was said, that "the streams thereof should make glad the city of God," and that river flows from the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. It is that river, if we will receive it, from whence all the springs and currents of spiritual life, whether flowing in the streams of Apostolic labour and Apostolic writings, or still more recently in the inexplicable calmness, peace, and joy of the believing Christian, in times even of overwhelming affliction, and in the hour of death, have been derived. And if there is no such river, then, upon all natural principles, there should be no such streams to flow from it. So much, then, for the true character of the results produced; they were neither imaginary nor natural.

Let us turn now to the consideration of St. Paul's personal knowledge of his own mission.

How did he know he was sent by Christ? and How do we know he was not mistaken? Now it may seem absurd to ask, How did he know he was sent by Christ? because his belief, as a Christian, must have seemed to him the proof of it; and his mission by Christ was bound up with that belief; but How did he know he was sent by *God?* Hooker saith[1], "There are but two ways whereby the Spirit leadeth men into all truth; the one extraordinary, the other common; the one belonging but unto some few, the other extending itself unto all that are of God; the one, that which we call by a special Divine excellency, Revelation; the other, Reason." By what process of reason, then, did St. Paul know that he was himself the recipient of Revelation? His reason must have borne him witness that he was,—How did it do so?

First, as a matter of fact, by the sharp contrast which there was between himself and the heathen world, on the one hand, and the Jewish world on the other. He could not be blind to this, and the world could not be blind to it. Here was a man acting upon strange and unknown principles, which had no counterpart among the philosophers, the statesmen, the warriors, or the poets of the world; acting solely upon the principle of ardent love for an absent, or at least an invisible and intangible Person, whom probably before His death he had never seen, and who was nowhere to be found

[1] Works, i. 150, ed. Keble.

among the living. Love for this Person, springing, as it seemed, from the sense of some insolvent debt of gratitude, was the professed and the only discoverable motive on which he acted. His conduct is not only inexplicable but impossible on the hypothesis that this was not the motive. His writings would never have existed had this not been his motive, for their very purpose was to make known, or at least to keep alive, the knowledge of this Person, and to stimulate love for Him.

And it is not possible to exaggerate this contrast. It was conspicuous and obtrusive. Where it did not awaken friendship it excited enmity, and called forth involuntarily a spirit of resistance. Nor was it the morality which the Apostle inculcated that stirred up this enmity, but rather the principle on which the morality was based and the motive proposed for it. The better spirits among mankind were not unfavourable to morality, but they cared nothing about Jesus; and the Gospel which Paul preached appealed no less forcibly to the immoral and the depraved, than it did to the moral and the pure.

Now for a man to find himself the depositary of a Gospel such as this, in direct contradiction to the whole world, was a phenomenon for which his own reason could not but offer some solution. He must try to explain it to himself. If any natural explanation could be found, he would

gladly accept it; if not, the operation of the supernatural must be recognised.

But, again, the contrast now spoken of was not one whit greater than the contrast between his present and his former self. He was in possession of light. He, too, was like the man born blind, who had received his sight, and could declare, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." Here, again, there was a direct contradiction between the present and the past. The two were incapable of reconciliation or harmony. On the evidence of this very Epistle one must cast out the other; both could not coexist in the same man, so that what *he* was might be the resultant of the two. Saul of Tarsus and Paul the Apostle were two distinct men. Saul of Tarsus, the old man, was crucified with Christ; Paul the Apostle lived by the faith of the Son of God, who had loved him and given Himself for him. The one was the object of hatred and loathing to the other; his own comparison elsewhere was that of the contiguity of a corpse: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The very consciousness of such a state was altogether new. When he had profited in the Jews' religion above many his equals, there had been no knowledge or indication of it. He was zealous of the law, and had gloried in it as in something from which he could derive benefit and advantage, as that by which he could be justified, as that,

therefore, which did not witness to his condemnation.

Nor was there any analogy between his case and that of the political or scientific conversions of our own day. There are doubtless certain broad features common to all conversions; but this was distinct from all, inasmuch as upon his own evidence it was to him the instrumental agent both of death and of life. By it he was at once crucified with Christ and risen with Christ; whether or not we accept Christ as the personal agent, we have no right to deny the fact so far as the Apostle himself was concerned.

If he assures us he was dead and risen with some one, for the moment it matters not who, we are bound to respect his assertion, to admit that in his consciousness, in his spiritual being, there was that which answered to such language, which justified the metaphor. We have no right to explain away the phrases used, but much rather are bound, as honest men, to accept them as the measure of the contrast between his past and present self.

But even if we attempt to explain them away, we are again baffled by the mere existence of these writings, which would never have existed had the change in question not been real. They are themselves the measure of the contrast. Could any Jew have written them? We have preserved to us the valued writings of two eminent Jews

contemporary with St. Paul, Josephus and Philo; Could *they* have written them? The answer is most emphatically, No! There is but one kind of change which bears any analogy to that which we contemplate in the case of this Apostle, and that is the change which attends conversion to *Christ*, at all times and under all conditions. It is not the renunciation of one faith for another, as that of Protestantism for Catholicism, or the reverse; but that of either, or of both, of these, for *Christ;* the recognition of *Jesus* as the living and reigning Potentate, at once absolute, universal, supreme, and solitary. Where there is this recognition, and nowhere else, there follow the like results that we discover in St. Paul.

For there is here the same power of destruction and of renovation, the same entrance of an unknown and energising principle, which operates to the entire subjection of the will, the cleansing of the conscience, the renewal and sanctification of the life. And here there is the like contrast which the Apostle repudiates as being exclusively his own, "If *any* man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." This is the abiding and unchangeable evidence of the working of the Christian principle, which is the same now as it was eighteen centuries ago; which, if it is not referred to Christ, must be referred to something, or to some one; and if it is not accepted in the

present or in past time as evidence of Christ, still demands recognition as a fact.

But if it is denied as a fact *now*, it cannot be denied in the case of this Apostle; for otherwise we should have had no record of his experience of it, and the writings which are acknowledged to be his would never have existed. Not, however, that their exclusive value turns upon the fact of their being his, for their very existence in that or in any age is still a witness to the production of the same results which were assigned to the same cause, and to the reality of the same experience in others if not in him.

In the contemplation, then, of this contrast which we know to have existed in St. Paul, What was the answer about it that his reason gave him? How could he account for the change between his present and his former self? Was it traceable to a human or to a Divine source? Let us listen to his own testimony: "Paul, an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead." "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." This witness is sure, if it be not tampered with. Paul was the convert of no one. He was received, we are told in the Acts, with suspicion by the disciples at Jerusalem, and would have been rejected but for the

large-hearted generosity of Barnabas. When it pleased God to reveal His Son in him, he had not conferred with flesh and blood, but had gone straight into the solitude of Arabia and returned again to Damascus. He was unknown by face to the Churches of Judæa which were in Christ. He had given place by subjection, no, not for an hour, to the false brethren at Jerusalem. He had even withstood Peter to the face. Though he was "the least of the Apostles, that was not meet to be called an Apostle," yet he acknowledged no superior in the Apostolate, and called no man his father in Christ. These are facts which, as honest men, we are bound to face. St. Paul owed not his knowledge of the Gospel to any single human being. It grew up in his mind spontaneously,

> "Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung,"

and yet wholly in opposition to his own will, and in defiance of his natural bias and the prejudices of his education. How are we to account for this? Was it natural or supernatural? Make the limits and confines of the two never so vague and undefined, yet this was a phenomenon beyond all question which was not natural: in its conditions and in its effects it was totally opposed to nature.

Again, we must bear in mind that St. Paul's message to the world was not a system of philo-

sophy which he had *thought out*. He had not elaborated it by profound meditation. It had not grown upon him from small beginnings and by gradual increase or expansion. There is no trace in it of progressive development. The knowledge of the Gospel is not greater in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians than it is in the First; it is not greater in the Epistle to the Church at Rome than it is in that to the Churches of Galatia. It is identically the same in all. If there was ever any man who justified his own assertions, who verified his own claims and made good his own pretensions, then St. Paul was that man. Not only was his Gospel opposed to, but it was totally independent of, prevailing systems of philosophy. It came before the world as something totally new, as the proclamation, not of theories, or of tentative suggestions, or of hypothetical conjectures, but of actual *facts* professing to have a power in them which could move the world.

Now these facts, the Apostle says, were *revealed* to him; he was suddenly made aware of them; not indeed of the facts as facts, which, perhaps, were sufficiently notorious, but of their relation to him, of their bearing upon himself and upon the world. He was suddenly shown the meaning of those facts which he knew, as the life and death of Jesus, or had heard of, but did not believe, as the Resurrection and Ascension, and, probably, was made acquainted with other facts which he

had never known or heard of; as, for example, the Institution of the Lord's Supper, mentioned in the eleventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. He saw, the history of the Acts asserts, and his own language seems to bear it out, *suddenly*[5], that the Jesus whom he hated had to do with him; that, somehow or other, He was *in him;* that He was possessed of Divine power as the Son of God; that though He had been put to death, He had risen again from the dead; and that, somehow or other, this death and resurrection were a death and resurrection *for him;* that he was concerned in them, and might regard them as his own. They were not bare facts having no reference to him, but touching him most intimately. He found himself contemplated in their purpose, and included in their effects. They had encompassed and absorbed him against his will, and in spite of his opposition to them.

And we lay no stress at all now on the reality of the facts, but on the remarkable circumstance of St. Paul's knowledge of them, which, on his own evidence, appears to have been sudden, and was certainly not derived from man. How, then, we ask, could he have become thus suddenly acquainted with these facts, or with the significance of them, and that without the intervention

[5] 1 Cor. ix. 1; xv. 3, 8. Gal. i. 16. Cf. Acts ix. 20. See also Jowett, as quoted before, i. 227.

of any human agency or influence, in a natural way? That the knowledge of facts he was before ignorant of should have come to him in this way naturally, is not possible: we must refer it to a source external to nature; for to say that it did not so come, is to fly in the face of the evidence.

And, on the other hand, the very circumstance of these facts becoming on the sudden, as it were, self-illuminating, of their becoming to him centres and sources of light in such a way as to scatter and expose his darkness, to remodel and reform his life, to convince him that they were designed to be so likewise to humanity at large, and, therefore, to make him willing to sacrifice his whole life, his strength, talents, time, fortune, and prospects, to bringing about that design; this of itself may be received as evidence that there was a vital power in the facts—in other words, that the facts themselves were true.

But, again, that he should suddenly become alive to the true nature and bearing of these facts, that he should, without human agency or influence, be led to pass judgment on his former life as a mistake, to condemn himself as guilty of heinous offence in the light of them, and to *believe* only that they supplied him with a fresh and true motive for existence and a new principle of life—this is a circumstance so remarkable, so peculiar, that we are at a loss to say it is to be accounted for by the ordinary operation of the

human mind, or that the causes of it are to be discovered any where within the region of nature.

Surely, then, upon the due consideration of all these circumstances, evidenced to us by the testimony of St. Paul himself, and that in such a way as to receive also the corroborating testimony of those to whom he wrote, whose general consent is implied in the epistolary form adopted, we are warranted in saying that in the contemplation of his own position, and the phenomena of his spiritual history, there was but one conclusion at which the impartial judgment of his own enlightened *reason* could arrive; namely, that he was the favoured subject of a Divine revelation.

Now thus far we have been dealing only with those features of the case which, though pointing to the supernatural as a cause, are themselves strictly natural. When, therefore, in addition to these we bear in mind the many indications implied rather than expressed, or, at least, mentioned casually without the slightest appearance of design, that these were not by any means the only features of the case, but that over and beyond these there were others which had a valid claim, if any such claim could be valid, to be regarded as strictly supernatural—when we take into consideration all the circumstances which preceded, attended, and followed in this case, it becomes something more than difficult not to see that the calm and unbiassed reason of the Apostle

must have fully borne him witness that he was, in the highest possible sense, the recipient of a Divine revelation.

He had ample cause, which any man in the same position could not but recognise as ample, to believe himself "an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God[6]." He knew by evidence which was deeper than his own consciousness, whether physical or spiritual, seeing that his consciousness was the organ in which it was revealed to him, and by which he perceived the revelation, that the revelation had been given to him. It was contrary to his nature, that is, to his natural will, and it was not derived through the intervention of any second person. The possession of the light was the evidence of the revelation, and the nature of the light the proof of its origin. Just as we recognise instinctively the light of sun, moon, or stars, and distinguish the light by the object revealed, so here was the recognition of a light which could be none other than Divine, seeing that the object it revealed was good. The perception of this light led the Apostle unto God, revealed God to him; it could be none other than God's light; for the light of the moon will not lead us to behold the sun, nor the light of the stars enable us to perceive the moon. There may be false suns in the heavens by day, as there may be wandering stars by night, but the light of these

[6] 2 Cor. i. 1.

cannot for one moment be confounded or compared with the true light given forth by either stars or sun; least of all will the light of the false enable us to behold the true; it is by its own light alone that we can see the sun, and having once seen it, the possibility of error is precluded.

Now it was the sudden rising upon the soul of the Apostle of the light of God in Jesus Christ that revealed God unto him in Christ. He knew that it was God who was revealed unto him, for it could be no one else; just as when a man beholds the sun he knows it is the sun that he beholds. So God had "shined in his heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ[7]," and he knew it was the light of God. The fact that this light visited him exceptionally, independently, and in conjunction with supernatural circumstances and the bestowal of miraculous powers, constituted a combination of evidence which it was not possible to resist, and became itself the basis of a mission which it was equally impossible to decline. He would have declined it if he could[8], but he was taught that it was his noblest privilege to fulfil it, and most nobly did he fulfil it.

And in fulfilling it, even unto death, he became a lasting monument of Divine grace, a witness to the end of time to the truth of Jesus as the living and ruling Lord; even as to himself, his own life

[7] 2 Cor. iv. 6. [8] Cf. Acts xxii. 19.

and labours, independently of the success which followed them, must have borne a continual testimony to the reality of his mission, "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft[9]." He must have been an enigma to himself, an absurd and inexplicable paradox, if, doing and suffering such things in compliance with no human authority, he had not received the Divine command, and with it the Divine strength for doing and suffering them. If the work proclaims the workman, here, verily, was a work of no human character, and of no earthly mould, and, therefore, a workman endowed with a Divine energy and a Divine commission.

And in the contemplation of such facts, at once undeniable and undoubted, shall we yet ask the question, How do we know that he was not mistaken? or, asking it, be over careful to supply the answer? Assuredly, here, if any where, there can be no mistake, for here we are on the very confines of the supernatural, within earshot of the voice of God. The message proclaimed by Paul was no human message. Its very nature declares it to be not of man's invention or of man's discovery. It was not the *kind* of thing that man would have invented or been likely to invent; because, however much it may adapt itself to the

[9] 2 Cor. xi. 23.

deficiencies of his nature, and promise the fulfilment of his most ardent aspirations, it can do neither the one nor the other till it has first subdued his natural will and brought into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Man does not naturally fly to that which promises to overthrow before it blesses him, he does not naturally take refuge with that which offers to crucify before it crowns him. If the Gospel was a human invention, considering the ample reward it holds out, it should find more acceptance among men, and not encounter that rooted enmity which it meets with in us all until we have embraced it. If the Gospel were after man, then there should be no natural antipathy to it, no actual hindrance to its progress, as we all know there is, and as none better know than they who have from the heart believed the Gospel.

But as Paul's message was not human, so neither was his life. What earthly motive could suffice to make a man undergo what he underwent? If any earthly motive were sufficient, there is a conspicuous absence of any such motive in the Apostle's Christian career. There is no trace of ambition, or the love of fame, or the lust of power, or the thirst for popularity; if any of these motives weighed with him, they were most signally frustrated, and none but a madman or a fool could have thought at that time of resorting to such expedients in the pursuit of any.

No! his life was a superhuman life, not in what it accomplished, but in its character and complexion. It was no human or earthly *taste* which he gratified in preaching the Gospel. It was an unaccountable infatuation, if it was not in obedience to a Divine command; a wild and preposterous dream of folly, if not the fulfilment of a Divine mission. There is but one discoverable motive to be assigned to it, and that is the ardent love, the devoted affection of insolvent and bankrupt gratitude, for the unseen but living Person who had died for him.

And as with his life, so also with his writings. The very existence of them as mere literary monuments cannot be accounted for on any principles of nature; marked as they are by a startling originality, their theme is not a natural one, but felt instinctively to be opposed to nature. The root which produced so fair a plant, so sweet a flower, and fruit so rich and rare, can have sprung from no earthly soil; the springs which nourished it can be traced to no mountains or hills of earth. Here, if any where, is a rose from the garden of the Lord; a lily from the deepest glades of paradise; a vine from the vineyard of the well-beloved, in God's own very fruitful hill. Unbelief may labour, but labour in vain, to disprove its origin with a hopelessness only to be surpassed by that with which it would of itself seek to produce a plant so fair and noble, with

sweetness and fruit so worthy of God, so grateful and beneficent to regenerate man.

Surely, then, we need not ask, How may we know that the Apostle was not mistaken? Upon careful, and earnest, and devout consideration we find all the credentials and conditions of a Divine mission fulfilled and exhibited in him, as they are exhibited and fulfilled nowhere else. He, if any one, was sent by God. He, if any one, is a standing witness to Christ. We need but to be penetrated with his light ourselves to recognise it as derived from Him who was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. While we are in darkness we cannot see the light; but coming out of the darkness of a sinful and selfish unbelief, we shall know of a surety that his own words were true, and that "Paul" was indeed "an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead."

LECTURE VIII

THE REVELATION OF ST. PAUL

GAL. i. 8

"*Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*"

NO maxim is more frequently proclaimed or more readily admitted in the present day than that ours is an age of progress. Every branch of human knowledge has received a development in the last fifty years that is simply astounding. Our material progress is so manifest that there is probably no thinking person from whom it has not elicited expressions of astonishment. Our scientific progress is equally astonishing to all who are capable of forming an opinion about it. Every known field of inquiry has been explored, and fresh fields are daily being discovered to stimulate investigation; our social and political existence has felt the influence of this progressive impulse, and has obeyed it. For evil or for good we have marched onward with the

course of time. We have been borne along with the current of progress. We have all of us more or less caught the spirit of the age, and the spirit of the age is obedience to the law of progress. If we would, none of us is able to resist it, and probably few of us would desire to do so if we could.

Under the consciousness, then, of obeying this tendency, it is frequently asked, and not seldom asserted that Religion also must be progressive, Must not the Gospel itself be susceptible of development? Our knowledge has increased, our thoughts have widened, our stock of facts has enlarged, our ideas have changed, we ourselves have been moving. Is our religion alone to stand still? We can trace a growth of Christian doctrine even in the New Testament itself, is that book to be the limit of its growth? Is it not probable that every age would contribute its quota to the mass, till the latest hour of the Church's existence should be rich in the accumulated treasures of the past, the last age alone of Christendom possess the completed Christian faith?

Or is it not possible that the light brought in by the Gospel should go on brightening and diffusing itself till it had rendered the Gospel which brought it in superfluous? Is not Christianity itself to be regarded merely as one stage in the education of the world, in the nature of things

to be succeeded by another, till the absolute religion should be approximately reached? Nay, might not the Absolute Religion likewise be destined to render obedience to the Law of Progress, till the conscience of mankind should recognise instinctively the obligation of no religion whatever? Surely such a progressive development of the religious principle in man is conceivable. We can imagine it outgrowing itself till it failed for lack of strength, waned by degrees, and died away.

We can conceive a kind of Nemesis of conscience which should exclaim on the noblest and the purest principles, "Man wants no religion at all. It is religion which is justly chargeable with all the confusions and disorders he has suffered from. It has checked his enterprise, marred his happiness, sullied his enjoyment, narrowed his intellect, crippled his energies, hardened his heart. Away with it! Let him be but a god unto himself, and the power, and the wisdom, and the glory, and the greatness, and the peace, and the blessedness of a god are his. Earth becomes his home, society his heaven, time his paradise, and death his everlasting sleep."

Surely a picture such as this, however monstrous it may seem, has at times been realised. And the very fact of its being recognised as monstrous serves to show that such progress would be retrogressive. If the Gospel should be

so supplanted, it would not be Development, but Decay. If one extreme is Life, the other is, unquestionably, Extinction, Dissolution, Death.

But the question may arise, and frequently does suggest itself, Between these two extremes is there no reasonable mean? May not the Gospel require to be modified to meet the requirements of the age? Are we to suppose that a Jewish Rabbi, who lived and died eighteen centuries ago, had scanned the whole horizon of man's religious life, that he had sounded all the depths of man's religious knowledge, probed to the bottom of his religious consciousness, and measured the height of his possible development? If we accept his revelation, are we to bow to it as final? Are we to consider ourselves bound by his opinions, shackled by his supposed facts, restrained by the conclusions of his logic? Is it not given to us to make other discoveries in his own domain, other investigations into a region where he was one of the earliest, though truly a successful, pioneer? Are our speculations to be foreclosed by his superannuated *dicta?* Shall we shut our eyes to light that streams in upon us from various quarters, because it seems to be more colourless than his? If he had lived in the midst of this light, with our advantages, our science, our arts, our civilisation, would not he have been one of the first to hail its dawn, as he was one of the first to be its harbinger? Must we not believe

that he who had spoken with such contempt of the past, of the old world and its rudiments, with such hope of the future and its boundless prospects, would have thrown himself heart and soul into the stream of progress, have yielded unreservedly to the spirit of the age, let it carry him whither it might? Would he not have said that the law of progress was the law of Christ, and that the religion of Christ and the revelation of Christ must yield to it?

Now it would seem that an approximate answer to these questions might be found in the consideration hinted at before, that if the Gospel revelation is susceptible of any modifying change in one age, it must be in another. And from the known fluctuations of human thought, the conspicuous instability of popular sentiment, it would not be possible to predicate that the conclusions of one generation would not be modified or even reversed by those of another. On the contrary, there is every reason to expect they would be. One can assign no limits to the action of change, if it is once allowed to act. It were absurd to suppose that any modification could be regarded as final. If the Gospel admits of alteration, it is surely destined to pass away. The growing enlightenment of the age must supersede it.

What, then, is the testimony of our Apostle on this subject? For whether right or wrong in his opinion, we are bound to accept what he tells us

of the nature of the Gospel as its true nature[1]. Can, therefore, any testimony be more distinct and emphatic than his? "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Here is an unalterable deposit committed to the world. By no voices in earth or heaven can its value be lessened or its authority be superseded. What evidence can be stronger? There can be no sort of question that Paul regarded his Gospel as a final revelation. He asserted most forcibly that it was not susceptible of change. Now if this be so, our decision is made for us with respect to the influence of the spirit of the age, upon the substance of the Gospel. Whatever may be the range of progress, it cannot touch

[1] That is to say, the Gospel which Paul preached must stand or fall on its own merits. We are at liberty to reject it, if we please; but we have no right to think we can improve upon or correct it. Neither may we assume that it was a Gospel substantially different from that already in vogue, because St. Paul does not claim to have received a *new*, but only an *independent*, revelation. He was not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles, but he was not in authority superior to any, so that *his* Gospel had a claim to be received in preference to that of other Apostles, or to the detriment of theirs. He every where assumes that the message was one: if otherwise, he could not have written to Churches to which he was unknown, as for example to the Romans. Cf. 1 Cor. ix. 5. Rom. i. xv. Col. ii. 1, &c. The Epistle to the Romans alone is a witness that the Gospel which the Christians at Rome had received was substantially Paul's Gospel. He did not write to change or modify, but to establish and confirm their faith.

the Gospel revelation. For if that revelation were to progress in the manner described, it would at once become, as St. Paul says, "another Gospel," which could not be received even on the authority of a celestial being.

Nor is it difficult to see why this must be so. For the Gospel was the proclamation of a work done, of certain facts which had a twofold bearing. They declared the mind of God to man, and man's position with regard to God. If, then, the mind of God was liable to change, the Gospel might be expected to change, but not otherwise. And if the nature of man was likely to vary from one age to another, as we know it is not (nothing is more unvarying than what is commonly understood by human nature), then the relation of man to God would also vary and the Gospel be superseded.

It is very clear that this is the position which the Gospel claimed to occupy, which St. Paul asserted for it. How far he was right in doing so is a separate question, but it is undoubtedly true that he did. And, what is more, the very fact that it was thus presented, furnishes corroborative evidence of the reality of the Apostle's mission, and of the Divine nature of the Gospel. It is in this particular its own witness to its origin. In allowing these two positions, which are in fact impregnable, That the Divine nature is unchangeable, and That what is known as the heart of man is constantly the same from age to age, then it is

certain that any message coming from God to man would have direct relation to these two facts, and so far as it had would not be susceptible of change.

Nor is it any objection to this argument to affirm that Revelation itself was the subject of progressive development, because though this is to a certain extent true, it is likewise true that there was an absolute identity in the subject-matter revealed. St. Paul himself could find no more apt illustration of Christian faith than that of the patriarch Abraham, himself the father of the Jewish Church. The position of the Roman and Galatian converts by faith was that of Abraham. What the knowledge of Christ had done for them was to put them in the position of Abraham, who "believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." That there was a gradual development of historical facts, revealing more and more of the Divine plan, was no way inconsistent with the identity of spiritual truth these facts inculcated. We are, therefore, beyond all question, warranted in saying that the Gospel committed to St. Paul was intended to be final, and that *its finality was a token of its truth.*

It may be said, however, that "the Gospel" is a very vague term, that it is hard to determine what the Apostle meant, or the Galatians understood by it, and that its very vagueness opens the door to a large amount of controversy, if not of

misrepresentation, and therefore of alteration. But here again, if the Gospel had a Divine origin, and its accurate preservation was the object of Divine solicitude, as in that case it surely would be, we might reasonably expect that much of this apparent vagueness would disappear. And so as a matter of fact it is. If the Epistle to the Galatians or the Epistle to the Romans had been written or discovered now for the first time, no man of any intelligence could have the slightest doubt as to its general significance and bearing. Whatever obscurity might attach to parts, the general drift of the implied teaching would be plain to all.

And so again here, the very casual and unsystematic way in which Christian truth is alluded to rather than inculcated is a very strong evidence not only of the reality and genuineness of the writings, but also of the inherent truth of their concealed subject-matter. The writer was not concerned to make a scientific or formal statement of the chief doctrines of revelation which might serve as a manual of instruction for all who met with it, but he was writing on subjects of the hour, and speaking of those subjects with special reference to a previous matter with which both he and his readers were perfectly acquainted. What this matter was is not so much explained as inferred. It is the subject of discovery, rather than of superficial observation. And yet it is not

difficult to discover, because it is actually so concise and simple.

And not seldom this simplicity becomes conspicuous, obvious, and obtrusive; as, for example, when with righteous indignation the Apostle bursts out, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you[2]?" Here it is plain that the substance of his teaching had been the death of Jesus Christ. So, again, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified[3]." Or, once more, "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures[4]." Such incidental statements as these are volumes in themselves. They are simply exhaustive in the evidence they give as to the nature of the Pauline message. Whatever else it was, it was at least *this;* and this, in itself, included and embraced every thing. It was a central light shedding rays of transcendent brilliancy upon every object with which it came in contact. It was a many-sided crystal reflecting manifold and various hues whichever way it was turned. No one could avoid seeing

[2] Gal. iii. 1. [3] 1 Cor. ii. 2.

[4] 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

the hues, whether he was attracted by them, or whether he despised them. All were conscious of the light, whether it penetrated or whether it blinded them. The Apostle had a *fact* to tell mankind, that Jesus Christ had died. This fact, he said, was unique and solitary. In a world where all die, the death of Jesus stood alone. And that, because it occupied a mid-position between God and men. It was God's message to men. It bespoke God's love to men. For it was God's own appointed means for dealing with the sin of the world. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." It totally changed, therefore, the relation between God and men. Hitherto sin was undestroyed, now it was abolished. Men could go to God through Jesus without sin. There was "no condemnation to them that" were "in Christ Jesus." "The old man was crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed." It was this central fact, involving as it did the whole circle of Christian truth, which was the strength of the Pauline teaching; a strength which was equally strong wherever it came with power. It was conceivable that even he might be false to it, but the teaching could not be false. It justified itself in the hearts of all who received it. They were no less conscious of its truth than he was. For it came where it came with an irresistible might, which was the might of omnipotence. It

pleaded with the eloquence of a love greater than human.

It might, therefore, be ratified and confirmed with miracles, and signs, and mighty wonders; but the message itself was a miracle. The stamp of the Almighty was upon it. If the death of Christ had been no more than the death of any ordinary man, it would have had no more motive or moral power than any such death. But, as a matter of fact, for some reason or other the proclamation of it was attended with multitudinous exhibitions of tremendous moral power. No reason can be surmised for this, unless the death of Christ was intrinsically different from every other death. *If He died for our sins it would be so.* The appropriate evidence that He did so die is afforded by the known results that followed; of which the life and writings of St. Paul alone, had we nothing else, are sufficient proof.

Nor let it be for one moment thought that upon the supposition now made, the results should have been far greater than they were. If those results had been far less than they have, the testimony would still have been sufficient. We can understand a whole nation following one man to his grave with bitter lamentation and regret, but we cannot understand such a death being not only the subject of regret, but becoming also the perennial source of a new and national life. Still less can we understand the death of an

unknown man being, not to one nation but to many nations, not to one age but to many ages, not only a matter of infinite sorrow (for men have mourned for Christ as they mourn for an only son, they have been in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn), but also and at the same time becoming the perpetual and unfailing spring of new hope and new life, and infinite aspirations, as well as the impulse and encouragement to indefatigable energy, and the well-head of adequate consolation under what would otherwise be hopeless and unendurable sorrow,—this is what we cannot understand, unless in very deed and in truth there was in that death the actual life and strength of which such abundant evidence was given.

Now this is a matter of fact which admits of no dispute. It is not only a phenomenon of past ages, but one that we may test by the observation of our own experience, that wherever the death of Christ is apprehended as a death destroying sin, there the moral power of it is incalculable. The conscience, already more than commonly sensitive from sin, is forthwith relieved. It feels the weight of a burden removed. An unknown sense of emancipation is enjoyed. There is the perception of the freer breath and the purer sky which the great poet of the middle ages has described in fragrant and undying numbers at the opening of his second great poem, "after

emerging from the mortal atmosphere which had afflicted his eyes and lungs [5]."

But there is no reason why this should be so. There is no other character in history, the associations connected with whose death would work in this way; and yet, as a fact, the death of Christ thus works. St. Paul alone is a proof of it, if there were no second. The one supposition on which we can account for it is, that in some way or other Christ's death was the destruction of sin. If it were so, these effects might be presumed to follow; our own observation assures us that they do follow, we have, therefore, a strong presumptive evidence that there was this characteristic about the death of Christ. In short, at the present moment, after the lapse of so many centuries, and so many vicissitudes in the world's history, the death of Christ is a moral power of unabated strength and of undiminished potential energy.

Neither, again, is it a valid ground of objection that this power is not universally recognised. It has, beyond all question, an indirect influence, even where it is rejected. All must feel the moral

[5] "Dolce color d' oriental zaffiro,
Che s' accoglieva nel sereno aspetto
Dell' aer puro infino al primo giro,
Agli occhi miei ricominciò diletto,
Tosto ch' io usci' fuor dell' aura morta,
Che m' avea contristato gli occhi e il petto."
Dante, Purgatorio, i. 12—18.

beauty of Christ's death, even though they may be strangers to its power. But the fulness of its direct influence can only be measured where it is accepted, and there the acceptance already mentioned is the measure of it. Christ said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me;" and His Apostle contemplated "obedience to the faith among all nations" as the ultimate destiny of the Gospel; but the world has waited, and must wait still for this far-off issue; though meanwhile every individual heart that is drawn by the power of the Cross is one additional evidence of its power, and one independent witness to its truth.

The question, then, we have to determine is, How far the death of Christ, as the main feature of Apostolic teaching, is likely to be superannuated by the scientific and material progress of the age. And the question can scarcely be regarded as one that is difficult to solve. For, as we have seen, the subject-matter of St. Paul's revelation was not merely the death of Christ, which must have been an event of greater or of less notoriety, but the consequences of that death. Long before the journey to Damascus, he knew that Christ had died. It was not till the shining of the bright light round about him, and the utterance of the voice from heaven, that he knew what that death was to *him*. His revelation consisted in the perception of its relation to him and to the world. Now if this relation was a true relation, a reality,

it could only become superannuated by some change in one or other of the parties concerned in it. That any change can take place in God is absurd to suppose. If He revealed His will once, that will must be held to stand until He has revealed an alteration in it. No one supposes He has done this. Therefore, unless the condition of mankind is presumably altered, the bearing of the death of Christ upon mankind must be the same as ever. But there is no ground whatever to believe that the real condition of mankind is altered in the very least. The heart of man is not one whit nearer to the God whom the death of Christ is presumed to reveal, than it ever was: and if proof were needed, we have it here, in the presumption that the progressive enlightenment of the age has rendered needless the assumed consequences of Christ's death. That death, taken as a fixed point, must be the standard of each successive age of the world's history. The annunciation of its moral and spiritual consequences produced certain results in St. Paul's time. Can it produce the like results now? As a matter of fact, it can and does. Then we must measure the present condition of the world by the production of those results, and not by the instances in which they fail to be produced; just as we measure the condition of the world in St. Paul's time by the success that attended his Gospel, and not by the many notorious instances of

failure by which, doubtless, it was likewise accompanied [6].

In all these latter cases, it would have been just as fair to advance, as an excuse for the failure, the progress of the age, as it is now. That was not then the excuse in vogue, but whatever may have been the excuse, or the actual cause, we have to account for this fact, that it did not operate equally in all cases; for there were those, and they were many, in whom the Gospel preached, was nothing less than "the power of God unto salvation." And wherever it produced any thing corresponding to these words, which were actually used to express the effect produced, there it could not have done so but for an inherent power in the Gospel adequate to producing it; for no effect can be brought about in morals, or in physics, but

[6] It is assumed, that while the Gospel has stood still, the condition of the world and of human nature has advanced. The Gospel may have been adapted to the age of St. Paul: it is unsuited to our own; therefore we must have a modified Gospel adapted to the wants of the present age. But as a matter of fact the Gospel has not yet lost its power, as is frequently proved now; therefore we must not take the fact that many desire to reject it now, as a proof that the world has outgrown the Gospel; because, as a matter likewise of fact, many rejected it in St. Paul's time, and this is altogether left out in our assumption that the Gospel was more adapted to that age than it is to ours. The Christian records necessarily tell us mainly the successes of the Gospel; its failures we only learn by inference from those records, and from others of a heathen source, which for the most part pass it over in silence, thereby, so far, showing its failure.

by the operation of an adequate and sufficient cause. The motive power in the Gospel could not have been supplied by any thing in itself substantially unsound.

As therefore we have seen that the evidence in favour of St. Paul having been the subject of an actual revelation is so strong, and as we know that the consequences flowing from the death of Christ were at least a part, and that a central part, of this revelation, it would seem that as far as the revelation was true, it would not be capable of being superannuated, but would be necessarily final. If it was a truth revealed from heaven that the death of Christ took away sin, was the appointed and designed means for destroying sin, then, until God has revealed some other means, the appointment of this must inevitably stand. But the appointment of any other means is not alleged; the non-existence of sin itself, or the antecedent difficulties of revelation, are rather insisted on, thereby showing that however marvellous the progress of the age may be, the *offence* of the Cross has not yet ceased, seeing that the very purpose of it is ignored and the want of it unfelt.

And after all, What is the progress of the age? We progress in arts and sciences, in civilisation, in knowledge, and in manners, but we do not progress in *nature* physically, intellectually, morally, or spiritually. Man's physical nature is what it

always was. The intellectual standard of the present day is not higher than in former ages. Plato and Aristotle may have been equalled, but they have never been surpassed. Shakespeare and Milton have not yet been equalled, notwithstanding the vast intellectual activity of the age. Man's moral nature, notwithstanding the great influx of light which, all must admit, has been brought to bear upon it since the rise of Christianity, is still the same as it ever was. The fact of a million and a half or two millions of armed men being maintained at an enormous outlay, in the smallest and most civilised quarter of the globe, in the latter half of the nineteenth century of the Christian era is alone sufficient to prove that.

And as for man's spiritual nature, what shall we say to this? Is it not still an arid and hopeless waste, wherever the fertilising streams of the grace of God have failed to flow; and is not this shown by the fact of man's spiritual nature being altogether and always ignored, except where the Scripture account of man is received? He is not commonly regarded as a spiritual being, except in relation to God, who is a Spirit. It is considered an exhaustive account to give of him, to say that he is a being endowed with social instincts, and possessed of a physical, moral, and intellectual nature. The fact of his being what he really is, a spirit made in the image of God, endowed with faculties intellectual, moral, and physical, is alto-

gether left out, because the recognition of it seems to involve antecedent considerations which must by no means be allowed. And yet if, as a matter of fact, man has a spiritual existence, all analysis and treatment of him must be wrong which is conducted in ignorance or neglect of this great fact.

In spite, therefore, of all our progress, material, social, political, moral, which we have no desire to underrate or to disparage, it seems nevertheless obvious that our *nature* has nowhere been the subject of this progress: indeed we *know* that our nature remains the same; were it otherwise we should be at a loss to deal with it. The accumulated wisdom of past ages would cease to have any practical bearing on our own: it would concern a different order of beings; for we should occupy a different platform from that which our fathers held. It is because, in spite of the change of circumstances, our *nature* remains unchanged, that we can reap the wisdom which they have sown, and gather the harvest of their toil.

Now the revelation of St. Paul came with a direct message to the *nature* of man. It professed to reveal God's method of dealing with that nature; God's purpose in renewing and restoring it. And this method, if right once, must be right always. If it was *God's* method, it doubtless would be right. And whether or not it was God's method must depend upon the validity of St.

Paul's claim to be the recipient of a revelation. Of that claim we have been endeavouring to judge. Possibly not one of the least conspicuous marks of the revelation, if real and valid, would be the declaration of its finality. In proportion as it was exceptional it would be final; and certainly nothing could be a more evident token of his own reality than the degree in which he could abstract himself from the revelation. If it was really God's revelation, neither he nor an angel from heaven could alter it. If it was his own revelation, he could mould it to suit his own purposes; if he had been employed merely as the instrument of it, he would have no power to touch it. Once given it was unalterable.

But this is what he declared it to be. He looked at it altogether apart from himself. He regarded it as a precious deposit, with the keeping of which he was entrusted, and for which he was responsible. He dared not manipulate his message, at the peril of the curse which he himself pronounced. Whether or not this was true, it was at least one of the marks of truth.

But if he dared not do it, least of all may we. And if no angel from heaven was allowed to do it, least of all may intellectual progress and the march of human intellect on earth be held a valid excuse for doing it. No, whatever Paul's Gospel was, that was to be the standard of all the ages, and not their plaything. Whatever his revelation was,

that was to be their ultimate appeal, and not their own shifting register, which moved as they moved. It was not to be ruled by them, but they by it.

"How then," it may be asked, "is allowance to be made for the infinite varieties of condition and circumstance which are known to exist among men? We must take these into account and act accordingly." And yet not so, if the very object of the Apostle's revelation is to get below all these superficial varieties to the central identity. It is man, as man, to which the Gospel speaks: "For there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for all are one in Christ Jesus."

And if this obliteration of external difference is the effect of the Gospel, it is because the Gospel operates there where these external differences exist no more, but are merged in the common nature of man, where the Jew and the Greek, the freeman and the slave, the woman and the man, are essentiallly one in the identity of their original humanity. If the Gospel is equally adapted to all the varieties of race and station—and of that the acknowledged letters of St. Paul alone are evidence—so also is it to all the modifications and vicissitudes of time. The progress of the age cannot outstrip the action of the Gospel, unless it is capable of doing that for human nature which the Gospel offers to do for it, namely, reconcile man to God.

Now this it is certain that the progress of the age does not even profess to do. The march of intellect and material progress come with no message out of the infinite to man's spirit and heart. The bereaved parent or widow gathers no consolation for the bitterness of sorrow from the thought that the age is advancing in knowledge. Rather the recollection of that very advancement will serve to increase the bitterness of the sorrow, by reminding that, after all, the progress was too slow to arrest the fatal stroke. The dying sinner, perplexed and wearied with a load that he cannot shake off, and oppressed with undefined terrors with which he strives in vain to cope, can derive no thought of peace from the recollection of the accelerated progress of the age. It seems, on the contrary, to mock his palsied energies, to deride his nameless and involuntary fears. No; these are the times to make us feel our impotence in the want of a trustworthy, credible assurance that we are verily at peace with God. No material or social progress, no advancement of science, can give us this. As long as there is death in the world, as long as there is sorrow in the world, we shall want a message, not from the development of our own powers, not from the resources of our own disguised weakness, but from God: and the message which comes with the best credentials will then be the most welcome.

Again, the fact that St. Paul's revelation was of

a kind to be independent of the growing enlightenment of this or of any age is shown by the nature of it. For that revelation did not consist of a scheme or creed to which additions might be made from time to time, so that in the latest ages it would be exhibited in a condition of the greatest completeness, but it was the manifestation to mankind once for all of the final basis on which confidence towards God should rest. This was a series of natural, though at the same time supernatural, acts, done by God Himself on behalf of man. The life and death of Jesus, inasmuch as they were events occurring in the midst of the natural course of human history, and affected more or less by the pressure of surrounding events in that history, were natural; so far as they overstepped these limits, and bore in upon the unseen and eternal world, were supernatural; while the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus were events essentially supernatural, and only bearing on the natural so far as they were attested by the natural senses. It was these events, then, of which the central point was the death of Christ, as a sacrifice for sin, which St. Paul proclaimed as the Divine basis of human hope towards God. This was the sum and substance of his Gospel. For the truth of it, as far as it was matter of human history, he vouched, and indeed the world at large was witness, for these things were not done in a corner: but being true historically, it was also,

he maintained, possessed of a *moral* truth, which if it really was from God, it could not but possess; and of this moral truth the moral nature of man was capable of being made conscious.

In St. Paul's idea, the Gospel was like a light of transcendent and pervading brightness, which had only to be exhibited in the dark places of the conscience to make the moral nature of man aware of its presence. For it is not possible for light to shine without being recognised as light, unless indeed the visual organ is impaired, or, from long familiarity with the light, has become unconscious of it. So he was not careful to avoid the possible imputation of a logical *petitio principii* when he said, "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." In the case of those who denied that Christ was the image of God, who professed themselves unconscious of the moral truth of the Gospel, there was nothing more to be done. The light had shone and had been rejected; it had not been recognised as light. The darkness had not taken it down into itself. *That* did not show that the light itself was darkness, but only the want of a capacity for receiving it. These very persons themselves were after all the best and only competent judges how far the Apostle's profession

was a just one, that he, by manifestation of the truth, had commended himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

For it is not alone by acknowledgment that truth is established. It does its work equally even where it is rejected. The final triumph of truth, and the ultimate result of truth, the Day alone shall reveal. All that we can do is to manifest the truth to the conscience to the best of our ability. The result we must leave with God. But there are certain primary facts to which we may appeal with confidence. For example, the conscience of every man must witness more or less to sin, as an inward fact. The presence of internal disorder is a fact of which every man living must at some time and in some degree be conscious. How is this disorder to be set right? To that question the revelation of St. Paul professes to give the sufficient and the only answer.

But where the question is not asked there is no room found for the answer. We can only wait till the question shall be asked. Then we may hope, at least, that the answer may be considered. The proposed answer is, By accepting thankfully the means provided by God for setting the disorder right. Of one point we may be certain, that no man can be an adequate judge of the efficiency of the means provided, until he has himself complied with the conditions attached to them. The

only test must be an experimental one. It is vain to reject the means until they have been found useless.

So far, then, every man carries about in his own personality the power of testing the reality of the revelation. Comply with the conditions and the results will follow. Accept the means provided for dealing with the known disorder as God's means, and it shall be known that the disorder is rectified. The validity of the means shall be confirmed by the results following. The removal of the disorder shall attest it. The witness shall be within. But it is not possible to have the witness without complying with the means. It is impossible to enjoy the luxury of doubt, and yet reap the harvest of belief. The two are incompatible by virtue of an eternal contradiction like that which severs, as the poet assures us, between sinning and repenting [7].

Now it was this witness for one thing which confirmed the Apostle's revelation to himself. He knew that the disorder within him had been rectified, that he was sometime darkness, but was now light in the Lord, but he knew that what was light for him was light for all men, and so he came for a witness to the light, and bore witness

[7] "Ch' assolver non si può, chi non si pente
Nè pentere e volere insieme puossi,
Per la contraddizion che nol consente."
Dante, Inferno, 27. 118.

to the truth of the light. He lived himself near to the centre of the light, and it lighted him more and more. And wherever he came men felt his light, and felt that it was not his own light, for it lighted them as it lighted him, and drew them not to him but to the centre of the light.

For there was this common feature about all those who were thus drawn, that the impulse they obeyed was one which sought and did not shun the centre. This was their law of progress; a force centripetal and not centrifugal. The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ was their central object of attraction. In Jesus Christ and Him crucified was their common ground of hope. That they might know Him and the power of His resurrection was their ceaseless aspiration. If they or he were led away to any other Gospel, even by angelic voices heard from heaven, they could wish that both might be accursed.

For all that could be done in attestation of the Divine origin of this Gospel had been done in proof of it; but after all, the Gospel was its own witness. Though it was a glorious thing for Christ to burst the bonds of death, yet none but the Son of God could *die* as He died. The Cross was the greatest triumph of Christ, and not the inevitable victory over death. The Cross of Jesus Christ was the reconciliation of the world, and therefore His greatest glory. And wherever the world was conscious of the want of reconciliation,

there it would prove His triumph. It would be hailed as the atoning mystery—the mystery which explained all mysteries; the Divine solution of the world's enigma, itself unsolved; the sweetest, saddest, darkest, brightest, truest, and most human, sublimest and most unearthly, point of all human history.

But even this, while it stamps the Gospel as Divine, yet asks for faith that it may be apprehended; for the death of Christ, merely as an act of violence and unrighteous cruelty, might have been the lot of any man. Those very elements in the death of Christ which mark it as Divine are themselves the objects of faith. That He died on the Cross no man can dispute: that He died for our sins is the very subject of revelation. But who shall prove that His death was a death for sin? Believe it, and you shall know that it was so by the felt destruction of your sin: believe it, and it shall prove itself to you by the consequences which flow therefrom. You shall know it even as the Apostle knew it, and as they knew it to whom his revelation was a revelation of the truth of God. The Cross shall be to you a source of superhuman strength, a fountain of Divine peace, a storehouse of unfailing consolation, which, by the nature of its own testimony, shall put to silence the rebuke of doubt, and bring to nothing in comparison the certainty of things most certain.

But be sure of this, that even as the death of

Christ for sin is itself the subject of Revelation, so no man but by Revelation could ever have discovered that such virtue was inherent in it. Supposing the extinction of sin to be the real significance of Christ's death, no process of reasoning, no effort of thought, no intensity of contemplation, no merely tentative experiment, could ever have found it out, or even suffice to explain the fact that such significance was assigned to it.

This then of itself constitutes a very strong presumption in favour of the reality of the Revelation. It is not the *kind* of thing that the unaided faculties of man would have conceived. Indeed, it is always more or less in defiance of the natural will that such virtue is admitted to pertain to the death of Christ. No man is brought to accept it as a fact, but in plain resistance to his natural inclinations. And the history of Christian experience abounds with instances, in which it has only been admitted after long years of determined opposition. In ordinary cases, therefore, it is not difficult to trace the operation of a controlling Mind, although it may work within the limits of the common laws of human life. But with how much greater justice must we predicate such operation in the case of the great Apostle of the Gentiles! Taken on his own confession, he most certainly recognised the supremacy of a Will before the might of which he was but as clay in the hands of the potter.

And here the contemplation of the natural leads us onward, by successive steps which we can scarcely decline to follow, till it lands us in a region where we meet with phenomena which are something more than natural, where the light of the moon is as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun is sevenfold as the light of seven days.

For who can contemplate this great preacher of the Gospel, won from the ranks of Christ's most determined enemies, won even in spite of himself, in defiance of all his prejudices, the strong bias of his inclinations, the natural tendency of his education, to the detriment of all his prospects, at the sacrifice of his personal ease, hereditary fortune, national friends; at the risk of his health, liberty, and even life, which was ultimately laid down in the cause, to be the steadfast and consistent soldier of Christ, the devoted servant of his Master, the faithful and laborious preacher of His Word, and finally, the courageous martyr to His truth,—and not see that in contemplating him we contemplate one who is moving about, not in the light of common day, but under the bright shining of a light which is none other than that of the Sun of Righteousness Himself?

Who can fairly estimate the phenomena which the acknowledged writings of St. Paul exhibit, the clear evidence there is that he had once vehemently persecuted the Man whom his whole life

afterwards was spent in proclaiming as the Son of God, as the Redeemer of the world, as the Author of blessings the most precious and invaluable to man,—Who can estimate the evidence no less clear, that his personal love for that Man was to him the source of new hope and new life, and supplied the motive to conduct never before witnessed in the history of the world; which was nothing short of absolute and unaccountable madness if the cause for it existed merely in his own disordered imagination, if the consequences of the facts he proclaimed were nothing more than imaginary, because the facts themselves, though at the time unquestioned and unchallenged, were actually non-existent,—Who can see the manifest tokens of a new and unexampled principle at work in his heart and life, the principle of faith in the unseen, of confidence and trust in the love of a gracious, reconciled Father, reliance on the work of a glorified but invisible Saviour, strength in the possession of a Holy Spirit imparting holiness,—Who can see the courage, the dauntless perseverance, the unshaken resolution, the force of irresistible moral suasion and influence, the habit of chastened and uniform personal rectitude, truth, and purity, which characterised his life and adorned his teaching,—Who, I ask, can see all this (and yet, again, Who can fail to see it?), and not perceive also that in the Apostle Paul there is an eloquent and faithful witness to the truth and

power of the Lord Jesus Christ—a witness, verily, who being dead yet speaketh ?

For who in the contemplation of such facts as this character supplies must not be constrained to allow that the unseen moral power which produced it was indeed a power of most marvellous strength ? Here was a result produced, by the estimation of which we can alone estimate the cause producing it. There is no possibility of error as to the result. It can be made neither less nor more than it actually is. The existent writings of the Apostle are the measure of it. They are the index on the margin of the broad stream of time, which serve to show how high the tide of Divine grace was once known to rise. It is an index which no lapse of ages can obliterate. No march of intellect, no progress of enlightenment, no development of science, no accessions of knowledge, can alter or efface it. We cannot mistake the result.

But still less can we mistake the cause producing it. We may say here, as was said of old in the case of One greater even than Paul, " These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind ?" The result is a supernatural result; it points, therefore, to a supernatural cause. The Epistle to the Romans is not the product of nature. It is the plain result of grace. Nothing but grace, the grace of the Lord Jesus, who liveth and was dead,

and is alive for evermore, could have produced it. And when these living words become themselves the source of eternal life to others, when, spiritually,

> "They from thick films shall purge the visual ray,
> And on the sightless eyeball pour the day"

of a new and regenerate existence, the brightness of a heavenly and Divine light, and open the eyes to behold glories before unknown in worlds as yet not realised, then we may learn Who it is whose spirit of life and light yet breathes and flutters, yet quivers and palpitates in them; then we may confess the mission of Paul to be verily and indeed from God; then we may feel and know that the revelation is, beyond all doubt, the revelation of one who, being "an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but an Apostle sent by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead," was empowered to say, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." For then, assuredly, we can understand that it was a revelation once for all given to the saints, which time itself shall have no right, no power to disannul, but which, from age to age, shall live on unchanged till it is merged in, and superseded by, the final unveiling of the Son of Man in glory.

APPENDIX

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

I.

DR. DAVIDSON states (Introduction to the Study of the New Testament, 1868, vol. ii. p. 196) that "According to the gospel" of St. Luke, "the time" of the ascension "was the day of the resurrection; according to "the Acts, the fortieth day after. According to the "former, it took place at Bethany; according to the "latter, from the Mount of Olives. The words also spoken "by Jesus are not the same; nor were they uttered at the "same place, for the gospel represents them as spoken at "Jerusalem; the Acts, on the Mount of Olives."

Let us examine the truth of this. The last chapter of St. Luke's Gospel contains the narrative of the journey to Emmaus on the first Easter Day. Emmaus was sixty stadia, or about seven English miles, from Jerusalem. Cf. Tasso, G. L. ii. 56. It was "towards evening, and the day" was "far spent," πρὸς ἑσπέραν ἐστὶ καὶ κέκλικεν ἡ ἡμέρα, when the two disciples and our Lord reached "the village whither they went." Allowing two hours for the journey back to Jerusalem, and an hour, αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ, for the sojourn at Emmaus, we can hardly suppose the two disciples to have reached the eleven at home before seven or eight in the evening. Here they had time to recount and discuss "what things were done in the way, and how" the Lord "was known of them in breaking of bread" before

Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them." Then there was the manifestation of Him to the disciples, and the showing of the hands and feet: then the eating of the broiled fish and the honeycomb: then the gradual process of illumination indicated by "opening their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures:" and then, finally, the command to "tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high." All this must have occupied at least an hour or two, which would bring it to nine or ten in the evening, say nine certainly, before the time at which "He led them out as far as Bethany." As therefore it is impossible that our Lord can have done this then, it is clear that the historian cannot have intended to give the impression that He did it; consequently we see that there must be a change of time somewhere in the apparently consecutive account between vv. 35—50. This change was certainly and necessarily at v. 49 (as Dr. Davidson admits, when treating of the passage in the Gospel, vol. ii. p. 40); but is it not more than probable that there is a change earlier still, if we can only find it? Now I venture to suggest that there is an indication of such a change at least as early as v. 44; for it is unlikely that, being in Jerusalem, our Lord should speak of it by name, as He does twice between vv. 44 and 50, "beginning at Jerusalem," "tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem." The use of such phrases is fair presumptive evidence that He was absent from Jerusalem at the time of using them, for otherwise it would have been more natural that He should say, "beginning at this place," "tarry ye in this city." If then this is really the case, there is every probability that in the latter part of this chapter we have the condensed narrative of several days, and of events happening at divers places; and then it becomes a matter of certainty that the Evangelist does *not* represent the ascension as taking place on the day of the resurrection, that he is *not* there-

fore at variance with the history of the Acts. If, on the other hand, it is needful to bring the two disciples back to Jerusalem as early as six or seven in the evening, then the time requisite for the subsequent events would prevent the possibility of the words "and He led them out as far as to Bethany" referring to the day of the resurrection; because the same reason which would oblige the disciples to return *before* sunset would prevent them leaving the city *after* it, for a visit to Bethany. That is to say, it is manifestly inconsistent with the plain letter of the narrative to affirm with Dr. Davidson that "according to the gospel the time of the ascension was the day of the resurrection."

Lastly, if, as would seem most natural, we make the return of the two disciples to Jerusalem to be late in the evening, the supposition of a visit to Bethany later still is wholly incompatible with the implied meaning of the Evangelist.

II.

Had the narrative in Acts i. stopped at v. 11 there is nothing whatever to indicate that the ascension did not take place at Jerusalem. It is only at v. 12 that we find "the mount called Olivet" mentioned. The mention of Jerusalem by name at vv. 4 and 8 shows, in accordance with what was said above, that our Lord was not there at the time, consequently we were so far correct in our surmise. Dr. Davidson has drawn an irreconcilable distinction between Bethany and the Mount of Olives. It does not appear that the Evangelist has done so. At xix. 29, he says, "When He was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the Mount of Olives," εἰς—πρός. It is clear, therefore, that if our Lord, according to the Gospel, led His disciples out "as far as to Bethany," they could without the slightest impropriety or discrepancy,

be said in the Acts to return to Jerusalem "from the mount called Olivet." There is no inconsistency at all. As Bethany lay on the eastern slope of Olivet, about a mile from the summit, is it not highly probable that Jesus led His disciples "out as far as to Bethany," returned with them to the summit, or nearly so, and then ascended while they returned to Jerusalem "from the mount called Olivet"? All this is suggested, if not implied, by the narrative, and the supposition of it makes every thing perfectly clear. A tradition of the fourth century fixed the scene of the ascension on the summit of the Mount of Olives, and there, in honour of it, the Empress Helena built a church. (Eusebius, Vit. Const. iii. 43. J. L. Porter, in Kitto's Cyc., art. Bethany.)

III.

"The words spoken by Jesus are not the same," because they were not "uttered at the same place." The words recorded at Acts i. 6—8 were manifestly spoken at Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, v. 9, those in vv. 4, 5 were probably spoken elsewhere, and may or may not be intended to be identical with those at Luke xxiv. 49. As we have seen, it is by no means clear that "the gospel represents them as spoken at Jerusalem." The probability rather seems to be on the other side. It is not inconsistent with either narrative to suppose them spoken in Galilee, Matt. xxviii. 16. The difficulty in completely harmonising all these accounts lies in their extreme brevity. Had the writers told us more, we should have understood perfectly; as it is, we must be content if the accounts can be shown to be not absolutely incapable of reconciliation.

IV.

Dr. Davidson repudiates the idea that the historian of the Acts meant to imply any thing in the second chapter but a miraculous endowment of the disciples with the gift of speaking languages which they had not learnt. We quite agree with him. "The expression," he says, "'to "speak with other tongues,' equivalent to Mark's 'to "speak with new tongues' (xvi. 17), is contrasted with "'in our own tongue wherein we were born,' i. e. our "mother-speech. It is true that the evidence for foreign "languages being really spoken is contained entirely in "the verses relating to the conflux of foreigners, and their "remarks on what they heard; but the writer evidently "adopted the opinion expressed by the foreigners."—p. 197. Again, "The account of the sudden deaths of Ananias and "Sapphira represents them as punishments supernaturally "inflicted by Peter, and cannot be explained on other "principles. The miraculous power put forth by the "apostles is said to have led to another persecution. They "were imprisoned by the Jews, but supernaturally set free "during the night by an angel."—Ibid.

Such is his testimony to the character of the book. The question of its credibility must be considered independently of the miraculous elements it contains. If found credible otherwise, we must then determine about the treatment of the miraculous elements. The presence of these must not be allowed to bias our judgment of the credibility.

V.

"Since Paley explored this field," (Acts and Epistles) "many believe that he set the whole argument in its "clearest light, and vindicated the credibility of both, by "showing that the writer of the history did not copy from "the author of the epistles, or *vice versâ*, but that the coin-

"cidences are *undesigned*. Such evidence, however, has "not appeared satisfactory to all. We shall examine it "under the following heads.

"1. The general conduct and teaching of the apostle "Paul, as set forth in the work.

"2. Various particulars in the book disagreeing with "other writings.

"3. The nature and form of the speeches interspersed.

"4. The historical narratives.

"The first thing that arrests the reader's attention is the "repeated journeys which the apostle made to Jerusalem, "some of which are satisfactorily explained, others not." —p. 207.

Now the total number of journeys to Jerusalem recorded in the Acts as made by Paul are *five*.

1. That in ch. ix. 26; some time after his conversion, when "Barnabas took him, and brought him to the Apostles."
2. That in xi. 30; when relief was sent unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa, "by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."
3. That in xv. 4; when it was "determined that Paul and Barnabas should go up to Jerusalem unto the Apostles and Elders about" the question of circumcision.
4. That in xviii. 21; when he bade the Ephesians farewell, "saying, I must by all means," δεῖ με πάντως, "keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem," of which nothing more is said, but that "when he had *gone up*, and saluted the Church, he went down to Antioch."
5. That which is first contemplated in xix. 21; when he "purposed in the spirit to go to Jerusalem," which is again alluded to xx. 16, when "he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost," of which he said, "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me

there," v. 22, which Agabus and the brethren endeavoured to dissuade him from taking, xxi. 10—15, but which he finally accomplished, and which was in fact, his last journey.

Now of these visits it would seem that Dr. Davidson regards the first three as "satisfactorily explained;" there are but *two*, then, to which we can refer his rejoinder "others not."

Of these the first, xviii. 21, is barely alluded to in the words "when he had *gone up*." If, as Wieseler and others have thought, this visit is identical with that in Gal. ii. 1, *it* also is satisfactorily explained; so that the "repeated journeyings" would be reduced to *one;* at the most they seem to be but *two;* surely a somewhat narrow foundation upon which to rest a charge so serious as this.

It is hardly fair to say (p. 208), that "in xix. 21, he "came to a determination to go to Jerusalem, while he "was actively employed at Ephesus," because the writer expressly says, that "*after these things were ended*, ὡς δὲ ἐπληρώθη ταῦτα, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome," as though there were some other natural causes operating which he has not mentioned. Nor, again, ibid., that "he abandoned the field of his operations at Ephesus "merely for the sake of keeping a Jewish festival at "Jerusalem." Surely the προσκυνήσων of xxiv. 11 scarcely warrants this. It is simply not true that this is the only impression conveyed by the writer of St. Paul's motives. It is quite conceivable that the great annual feasts may have supplied many motives for any well-known Jew to visit Jerusalem. Paul would see and meet with numerous persons in whom he was interested at Jerusalem, at such times, whom he would never see otherwise. These feasts were, so to say, *the season* of the Jewish metropolis,

and would be the natural time for strangers to visit it; and the purpose for which he now came to bring "alms and offerings," Acts xxiv. 17, would make it desirable to avail himself of such an opportunity. The history of the Acts shows us that over a period of many years Paul had paid but *five* visits. He certainly did not make "repeated journeys." But even if he had, the example of Christ Himself, who was in the constant habit of going up to Jerusalem when able to do so with safety, might furnish some parallel, if not excuse. Doubtless a Jew so patriotic as St. Paul would often have been glad to visit the chief city of his nation, if opportunity had offered; and one of the great feasts would be the most natural and appropriate occasion for doing so. We have the Apostle's own testimony to his observance of Pentecost, 1 Cor. xvi. 8, and probably the Passover, 1 Cor. v. 8.

The shaving of his head at Cenchrea, and the vow he took upon himself in the Temple, are fully accounted for by his own confession, 1 Cor. ix. 20, "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews;" for indeed, unless we admit these acts as real there is no *known* circumstance by which we can illustrate this confession. The mere observance of the Sabbath, or rather the mere availing himself of the weekly day of assembly for preaching to the Jews, the only occasion he would have, is not enough to account for it. If then Paul did not shave his head and join in the vow at Jerusalem, we are in total ignorance of the way in which he became to the "Jews as a Jew."

VI.

For this habit, moreover, "does not consist," it is said, "with his performing or allowing circumcision, as the book "of the Acts represents him, because he himself makes cir- "cumcision incompatible with salvation by Christ, Gal. v. 2." Certainly the writer of the Acts does not imply that Paul

circumcised Timothy with a view to his salvation. On the contrary, the mention of the fact is altogether exceptional as opposed to his ordinary practice, and only occasioned by the combination of exceptional circumstances. The cases were very different when Timothy was circumcised to conciliate the Jews, and the Galatians circumcised themselves to restore their lost confidence in Christ and to secure their salvation. Here indeed it was but too true that Christ did "profit them nothing," but there, the absence of a similar motive deprived circumcision of its pernicious meaning.

VII.

"Titus is unmentioned, though the apostle had a "violent dispute at Jerusalem on his account. In "like manner, Peter's appearance at Antioch and public "rebuke there, are unnoticed. It is impossible to sup-"pose that this silence is other than intentional" (p. 209). The writer of the Acts had no doubt a definite purpose in view when he wrote. The question is whether his purpose was that which Dr. Davidson suggests, namely, the reconciliation of the Jewish and Pauline elements in the Church by a misrepresentation of the conduct of Peter and Paul. It is alleged that the facts above were suppressed with a view to furthering *this* intention. It may help, perhaps, to the understanding of this objection if it is borne in mind that Paul himself makes mention of Titus in only two Epistles, Galatians and 2 Cor., besides the bare notice of his departure to Dalmatia in 2 Tim. iv. 10. If therefore he is not mentioned in 1 Tim. and 1 Cor., various causes may have operated to account for the omission of his name in the Acts, without our being obliged to infer that it was intentionally suppressed. There would have been no mention of Titus in the Epistle to the Galatians if his case had not borne directly on the Galatian controversy, and then

the fact that being mentioned in 2 Cor. he is unmentioned in the Acts, would not have been open to this insinuation; whereas, from the prominence attached to him in 2 Cor., it is equally strange, though in no way suspicious, that the writer of the Acts has passed him over in silence. To assign, therefore, the motive which Dr. Davidson suggests in the former case is no explanation whatever in this, and is therefore at all events but a partial reason for the silence in question. In all probability the case of Titus[1] was not singular on the occasion referred to, but St. Paul named him because he was well known to the Galatian Church; whereas for the historian to particularise him when there may have been one or two more, and when he had no other reason for mentioning him, would have been in no way necessary, and indeed foreign to his purpose.

With regard to Peter's visit to Antioch, the book of the Acts takes leave of Peter at the Council of Jerusalem, and, with the exception of the part he took there, makes no mention of him after his release from prison in ch. xii. We do not know why this is, but unless reason can be shown why the writer was obliged to record the circumstances relating to Peter subsequent to the Council of Jerusalem, no fair inference can be drawn from his silence about one of them. The knowledge he probably had that this event was already chronicled by St. Paul may have been more than sufficient to induce him to pass it over in silence.

VIII.

"According to the epistle to the Galatians, the apostle's "mission was to the Gentiles from the very beginning

[1] M. Renan understands Titus to have been circumcised. "La phrase, au premier coup d'œil, parait dire que Titus ne fut pas circoncis, tandis qu'elle implique qu'il le fut." Saint Paul, p. 89. In this case the omission of his name in the Acts would become a matter of still less importance. Professors Jowett and Lightfoot take the opposite view. See their notes on Gal. ii. 3.

"(i. 16). Such is not the portrait given in the Acts, "where he appears, immediately after his conversion, in "the synagogues at Damascus. . . . . The Acts make him "go first to the Jews as a rule; the reverse of what we are "warranted to infer from his own epistles" (pp. 209, 210).

Let us take the evidence on the matter supplied by his own Epistles. Rom. i. 16: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to *the Jew first*, and also to the Greek." ii. 9: "Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of *the Jew first*, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to *the Jew first*, and also to the Gentile." ix. 3: "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." x. 1: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." xi. 13: "I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: if by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.*" xv. 8: "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of *the circumcision* for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." 1 Cor. i. 22: "The *Jews* require a sign, and *the Greeks* seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, *unto the Jews* a stumbling-block, and unto *the Greeks* foolishness; but unto them which are called, both *Jews and Greeks*, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." 1 Cor. ix. 20: "*Unto the Jews* I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law." x. 32: "Give none offence, neither *to the Jews*, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God." These passages from these epistles will serve to show the kind of position that the Jews held in the mind and affections of St. Paul, and therefore how far the course he is said in the Acts to have adopted was likely to be in

accordance with that which was actually pursued by him.

Let us now turn to Gal. i. 16, and compare it with the Acts: "To reveal His Son in me, *that I might preach Him among the Gentiles.*" In Acts ix. 15 the Lord says to Ananias, "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name *before the Gentiles*, and kings, *and the children of Israel.*" xiv. 27: "When they were come, and had gathered the Church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith *unto the Gentiles.*" xxi. 19: "And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the *Gentiles* by his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord." xxii. 17: "And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and saw Him saying unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the *Gentiles.*" xxvi. 17: "Delivering thee from the people and from the *Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee:*" this was at the time of his conversion. 23: "That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to *the Gentiles.*" Hence we see how completely the Acts recognises the direct mission of Paul to the Gentiles, and how thoroughly his bearing towards the Jews in it corresponds with his own sentiments expressed as above in the Epistles.

IX.

"Brought into contact with the Jews, resisted and per-
"secuted by them, he had to defend himself against their
"accusations and appeal to their Scriptures. This is
"exemplified in the 22nd, 24th, and 26th chapters. At
"Lystra and Athens, however, he spoke to Gentiles; so
"that we have the means of comparing his doctrine there
"with that which his epistles set forth. On both occasions

"the fundamental principles of monotheism are inculcated. "There is this difference, however, that the Athenian dis- "course refers to the Messianic judgment, the certainty "of which is said to be confirmed by the resurrection of "Christ. In neither is there any thing distinctively Pauline, "such as justification by faith and redemption by the "blood of Jesus. . . . . This portrait of the apostle, so "unlike that given in his own epistles, suggests the idea "that the Acts were not written by an eye-witness and "companion, but by a later hand, who had a special motive "for the representation he gives; for it is impossible to "believe that the regular prominence of certain features "and the concealment of others was accidental."—pp. 211, 212. Does not every reader of St. Paul's Epistles know that his appeal to the Jewish Scriptures is constant and universal? And is it not clear that his style in addressing those whom he was seeking to convert must of necessity differ from that which he used in writing to Christians? The addresses in the Acts are all or nearly all of a missionary character. The Epistles were written to existing Churches. Let us first examine the sermon at Antioch in Pisidia, which was delivered in a synagogue, as being the only place to which the Apostle would have access, and on a Sabbath-day, as being the only occasion on which a large number of people would be met together. He begins with God's election of Israel, and rapidly reviews the history till he comes to David, when he says,—

Acts xiii. 23.	Rom. i. 3.
Of *this man's seed* hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.	Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made *of the seed of David* according to the flesh.
26.	16.
Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.	For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Acts xiii. 29. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and *laid him in a sepulchre.* But *God raised him from the dead.*	1 Cor. xv. 3. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that *he was buried,* and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. Rom. x. 9. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that *God hath raised him from the dead,* thou shalt be saved.
31. And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.	1 Cor. xv. 5. After that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; . . . After that, he was seen of James; then of all the Apostles.
32. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the *promise* which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath *raised up Jesus again.*	Rom. i. 2. Which he had *promised* afore by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures. Gal. iii. 18. If the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of *promise:* but God gave it to Abraham by *promise.*—Cf. Rom. iv. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 12. If Christ be preached that he *rose from the dead* . . .
38. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the *forgiveness of sins.*	Rom. iii. 24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the *remission of sins* that are past, through the forbearance of God.

Let any ordinary reader say whether these extracts

exhibit identity of teaching or dissimilarity; whether the message delivered in both is substantially the same or not. It would be possible to add many more passages from the Epistles, but these are enough. The substantial identity is the more remarkable in consequence of a certain superficial difference such as would naturally arise from the passing of one man's thoughts through the mind of another, and from their taking the tone and colour of the second mind, not to mention the difference of occasion.

We next take the speech at Lystra.

Acts xiv. 15.	1 Cor. viii. 4.
We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:	We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, &c.
16.	Rom. i. 24. 26. 28.
Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.	God gave them up to uncleanness . . . unto vile affections . . . over to a reprobate mind.
17.	Rom. i. 19, 20.
Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.	That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

Here also the identity of thought is more remarkable than the difference of language.

The sermon at Athens has many points of resemblance with that at Lystra, and therefore with the Epistles already quoted, but there are others of its own.

Acts xvii. 25.

Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

Rom. xi. 35.

Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.

26.

And hath made of one blood all nations of men.

1 Cor. xii. 20.

But now are they many members, yet but one body.

27.

That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for *in him*, ἐν αὐτῷ, we live, and move, and have our being.

Rom. x. 8.

The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.

1 Cor. viii. 6.

To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we *in him*, εἰς αὐτόν.

29.

We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

1 Cor. x. 7. 14.

Neither be ye idolaters . . . flee from idolatry.

30.

And the times of this ignorance, ἀγνοίας, God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.

Eph. iv. 18.

Alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, ἄγνοιαν.

Rom. ii. 4.

Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

31.

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will *judge* the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Rom. ii. 16.

In the day when God shall *judge* the secrets of men by Jesus Christ *according to my gospel.*

1 Cor. xv. 14.

If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found

> false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

The reader can judge for himself of the amount of divergence in teaching that these passages exhibit. He may perhaps think that the similarity, not to say the identity, of them is their most remarkable feature.

X.

Acts xiii. 38, 39. "This is the only passage in all the "speeches put into Paul's mouth in the Acts where there is "a distinct reference to justification by faith. Elsewhere "the announcement of the resurrection of Jesus, and his "Messiahship, founded upon the Old Testament, form the "substance of his doctrine. At Thessalonica he argues "that the anointed One must needs suffer and rise from "the dead, identifying him with Jesus. Before Felix, "Festus, and Agrippa, the apostle speaks from the "same point of view. The Messiahship of Jesus is the "main topic at issue between him and the Jews. The "invalidity of the law in respect to justification, and the "doctrine of justifying faith alone, are hardly alluded to, "only once certainly; while repentance, and the doing of "works meet for repentance (xxvi. 20), which is declared "to be the sum of his teaching to Jews and Gentiles, is "rather against that dogma; since the apostle himself "applies the term to moral improvement, not to the "mental disposition which Christian faith denotes" (pp. 211, 212).

These remarks are based on the assumption that justification by faith was the only doctrine St. Paul taught. Whereas this doctrine is not so much as mentioned in his own summary of his teaching: Rom. i. 3, 4. 1 Cor. i. 23,

24; xv. 3—8. 2 Cor. iv. 5. In fact there is no direct mention of justification by faith in either of the Epistles to Corinth (if we except perhaps 2 Cor. v. 21), although of course that doctrine is implied in almost every word the Apostle wrote. We must either assume that Paul had no intercourse whatever with Jews, which is highly improbable, or we must conclude that whenever he was brought into contact with them the subjects of discourse would differ slightly from those referred to when writing to Gentiles. As we have seen, notwithstanding this fact, the identity of the teaching is very remarkable. The resurrection of Jesus is a topic very prominent in Romans and Corinthians, and not omitted in Gal. i. 1. His Messiahship cannot be expected to appear so frequently in writings addressed to Gentiles, but with Jews that must have been the one prominent subject. Even this topic, however, is implied wherever Jesus is called *Christ*, which is the case continually. The essence of the Messiahship also is found in Rom. i. 1—4; xv. 8. 1 Cor. x. 3, 4, 9. 2 Cor. iii. 14. Gal. iii. 24, &c., &c., &c. Certainly the teaching at Thessalonica is quite consistent with his who in Gal. iii. and iv. deduced so fully the mystical significance of patriarchal history. The speech upon the stairs, Acts xxii., whether actually spoken by Paul or not, is specially appropriate, certainly far more so than any discourse upon justification by faith would have been. Nothing less can be said of his defence before Felix, in Acts xxiv., while the words alluded to in xxvi. 20 receive their fittest commentary in the whole of Rom. vi., not to mention 2 Cor. vii. Whereas it is a matter of fact, testified not only by St. Paul, but by universal experience, that there can be no real "moral improvement" without that "mental disposition which Christian faith denotes."

XI.

Dr. Davidson dwells very forcibly (p. 213) on the differences between the ninth chapter of the Acts and the 4th (*sic.* ? 1st) chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians. "The Acts say that Paul after his conversion remained "*some days* in Damascus, and forthwith preached Christ "in the synagogues there; that when the Jews sought to "kill him he was sent to Jerusalem, where the disciples "looked upon him with suspicion till Barnabas convinced "them of his sincerity; that he resumed his work of "teaching the Jews, till he was again compelled to flee "from Jerusalem and return to Tarsus." This is inaccurate, inasmuch as the Acts do not say that he was *sent* to Jerusalem, but simply "*when he was come* to Jerusalem." He may not even have have gone thither immediately on his escape; the historian tells us nothing about *that*, but merely takes up the narrative at the point "when he had come to Jerusalem." Again, it is vain to say that "the narrative in the Acts does not restrict his "preaching to the Hellenists;" for whether it does or not, we have no right critically to assume, still less to assert, that "Hellenists" must mean "Jews." Every one knows that it is hard to make these two accounts coincide; but at the same time every one must see that the differences are only such as might arise in the narratives of any two men, one of whom is speaking in the first person and the other in the third, but both of the same events with a different object in view. The seeming variance is the result of brevity in the historian, who had no desire to enlarge on this portion of his narrative. The sequence of events in the History and the Epistle is as follows :—

Acts.	Gal.
1. Then was Saul certain days at Damascus, ἐγένετο δὲ ὁ Σαῦλος . . . ἡμέρας τινάς.	1. Immediately I went into Arabia, ὅτε δὲ . . . εὐθέως . . . ἀπῆλθον.

2. And straightway he preached Christ, καὶ εὐθέως . . . ἐκήρυσσε.

3. But Saul increased the more in strength, Σαῦλος δὲ μᾶλλον ἐνεδυναμοῦτο.

4. And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him, ὡς δὲ ἐπληροῦντο ἡμέραι ἱκαναί.

5. Let down by the wall in a basket.—2 Cor. xi. 33.

6. And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, Barnabas brought him to the Apostles (i.e. Peter and James), παραγενόμενος δὲ ὁ Σαῦλος.

7. And he was with them (i.e. Barnabas, Peter, and James) coming in and going out at Jerusalem, καὶ ἦν μετ' αὐτῶν εἰσπορευόμενος.

8. And he spake boldly, and disputed against the Hellenists, ἐλάλει τε καί, who sought to slay him; but the brethren brought him to Cæsarea, and sent him to Tarsus.

2. And returned to Damascus, καὶ πάλιν ὑπέστρεψα.

3. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem, ἔπειτα μετὰ ἔτη τρία ἀνῆλθον.

4. For fifteen days, and saw Peter and James only.

5. Afterwards I came into . . . Syria and Cilicia, ἔπειτα ἦλθον, and was unknown by face unto the churches of Judæa.

6. Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and . . . Titus, ἔπειτα διὰ δεκατεσσάρων ἐτῶν.

Now here it is plain that 8 corresponds to 5, and that when the brethren sent him to Tarsus, Paul was unknown by face to the Churches of Judæa generally: they only knew of him by report. The first question is where to place the journey to Arabia. Following the notes of time indicated by the particles used, it seems probable that the ὅτε δὲ . . . . εὐθέως of Galatians would correspond to the ἐγένετο δὲ . . . . καὶ εὐθέως of the Acts, in which case, notwithstanding Alford's decision to the contrary, we must place the journey to Arabia *before* the "certain days" of the Acts. The use of δὲ in pure narrative warrants this, for it is irrespective of *time*, and denotes merely *sequence* of events without regard to time. Moreover, but for this mention in the Galatians, we should have known nothing of the journey to Arabia; and St. Paul, by saying, "I went into Arabia and returned again to Damascus," seems to

assign but a brief duration to it. The very fact of his not even staying at Damascus *immediately* after his conversion, but of his going to Arabia instead of to Jerusalem, would tend to show how direct his knowledge of the Gospel was, while on the other hand the fact recorded in the Acts that he preached *immediately* after his conversion, no notice being taken of the brief journey to Arabia, serves to confirm his own statement of the special revelation that had been vouchsafed to him. It seems more probable that there was a short interval of time in the middle of Acts ix. 19, sufficient for the journey to Arabia (which may have been "possibly the Arabian desert in the neighbourhood of Damascus," Ellicott), than that the εὐθέως of St. Paul can be made to give place to the ἡμέρας τινάς of the Acts. I am glad to be supported in this view by the opinion of Professor Lightfoot. By this supposed transition of time then, in the middle of v. 19 of the Acts we avoid the strictures of Dr. Davidson upon the insertion of it in v. 20 or 23. The preaching of Christ in the synagogues, then, by Paul will follow after his πάλιν ὑπέστρεψα, between which and his first ἔπειτα must come Acts ix. 20, 21, 22, "But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwell at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ." If we are right in this, "and after that many days were fulfilled" will then correspond to some period of time not referred to in Galatians, but spoken of at 2 Cor. xi. 33, and prior to the expiration of the "three years," which coincides with "when Saul was come to Jerusalem he assayed to join himself to the disciples." The only difficulty that will then remain is the reconciliation of the two accounts of this visit to Jerusalem. His object in it appears to have been to make the acquaintance of Peter, which he would have been unable to accomplish but for the intervention of Barnabas, who introduced him to Peter and James. For some unexplained reason he did not see John, but Davidson has no right to

say, "Paul's own account excludes John, that of the Acts includes him" (p. 213). It neither includes nor excludes him. In Paul's later visit (Gal. ii. 9), he seems only to have met "James, Cephas, and John." We may well believe him, then, when he says that on this occasion he did not see John. There is more reason in the remark that the fact of his being a convert "must have "been well known at the metropolis if more than three "years had elapsed since his conversion." It might, indeed, have been well known, and yet to a certain extent all the disciples have been afraid of him: his name would naturally be one of terror until by personal intercourse the feeling of suspicion had been removed. That this was the nature of the fear, rather than that it arose from entire ignorance, is perhaps to be gathered from the violent opposition of the Hellenists; for had no reports of his conversion reached the metropolis, it is not likely they would have been in a few days so highly exasperated, however "boldly" he might have "spoken in the name of the Lord Jesus." It was upon finding by this proof that the vague reports about him were but too true, that they went about to slay him, and that within "fifteen days." The short duration, then, of his visit will fully account for his being unknown by face to the Churches of Judæa, though "he was with the Apostles coming in and going out at Jerusalem;" while in the fact that he was conducted by the brethren to Cæsarea we may discover the opportunity he had of proclaiming the Gospel "throughout all the country of Judæa," xxvi. 20. If, however, this is not admitted, we must allow that the discrepancy is one in the historian himself, and not between the historian and the Epistles of St. Paul. It is perhaps worthy of note that in this latter place the change from the dative to *εἰς πᾶσάν τε τὴν χώραν* and the return to the dative in *καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν* may possibly indicate a mode of communication not directly personal as far as relates to Judæa, and if so,

the alleged discrepancy between Gal. i. 22 and Acts xxvi. 20 is done away. For this observation I am indebted to a friend.

XII.

"The journey to Jerusalem mentioned in the 2nd "chapter of Galatians, if it refers to the events recorded "in the 15th chapter of the Acts, presents various dis- "agreements with the latter, which discredit its accuracy" (p. 214).

These, according to Dr. Davidson, are chiefly nine.

1. "The story in the Acts says, that Paul and Barnabas "went up as deputies from the Church at Antioch; the "apostle himself, that he went by 'a revelation.'"

"It is remarkable that he makes no mention of the "Judaisers who occasioned the appeal to Jerusalem nor the "Church's commission with which he was entrusted."

Why should he, when it was not his object to appear as a delegate, nor to give the mission an official character, nor therefore to create a misconception for the sake of obviating it? He may have had personal as well public reasons for going, and either or both may have been grounded on "a revelation."

2. "The Acts speak of a public council, the Galatians "of a private conference."

And why may not both have coexisted, and each been entirely independent of the other: the one an episode in the other, and pertinent to the Apostle's object, but foreign to the historian's.

3. "The decrees of the council recognised the validity "of the law for Jewish-Christians."

Where did they do so? If they did, the Galatians by those decrees would be exempt.

4. "The epistle to the Galatians says that the only "thing which the apostles recommended to Paul was that "he should remember the poor at Jerusalem." [Where

does it say *at Jerusalem?*] "How could this be, if he "consented to the imposition of prohibitions on Gentile-"christians from which he declared their deliverance? "... (1 Cor. ix.)" *sic.*

One would naturally suppose that the case referred to in the Acts was one which came under the restrictions laid down, 1 Cor. viii., and that the resolution which concludes that chapter accounted for Paul's conduct: "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat *no* flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." Cf. Rom. xiv. 21. 1 Cor. x. 32, 33. 2 Cor. vi. 3.

5. "The story in the Acts represents the Church at "Jerusalem with the primitive apostles at its head as a "court of appeal, by which disputed questions should be "settled, and whose decisions Paul himself acknowledged. "He took charge of the decrees, and gave copies of them "to the Churches he visited. There was much disputation "or discussion in the assembly of the apostles and elders "(Acts xv. 2). Does not this imply a conflict of opinion? "Does it not presuppose that Paul and Barnabas were on "one side with respect to circumcision, and the elder "apostles on the other?"

Not at all; for Peter and James, the only Apostles whose speeches are recorded, were distinctly on the side of Paul and Barnabas, and indeed of the large majority, xv. 12. 22. The antagonist party were "certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed." Besides, we must remember that Paul himself dates the *recognition* of his Apostleship from this time (Gal. ii. 9). Afterwards, in writing to Gentile Churches, he would naturally assume an independent and absolute authority. His language would be, "If I be not an Apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you." 1 Cor. ix. 2. Gal. ii. 8.

6. "The story in the Acts leads us to infer that amid "the conflict of opinion the Apostles gave way to Paul. "Peter, James, and John conceded the point about the

"necessity of circumcision for Gentile converts. That "they did so with some mental reservation, or that they "yielded to the force of circumstances for the sake of "peace, appears from the whole spirit of the Jewish-"christians at Jerusalem, as well as from the subsequent "conduct of the apostles themselves. The book of the "Acts also intimates that Paul made concessions. He "consented that the Gentile-christians should come under "the command of abstinence from meats offered to idols, "and fornication. Thus the decrees of the congress were "'articles of peace.' Concessions were made on both sides. "The declarations of Paul himself do not agree with this. "According to the Galatian epistle his position was one of "independence. He yielded nothing."

It is best to take the language of the Acts, and allow it to speak for itself. Peter says, "Now, therefore, why tempt ye God to put a *yoke* upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (Cf. Gal. v. 1: "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the *yoke* of bondage.") James, after saying that the admission of the Gentiles was the fulfilment of prophecy, says, "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day." The speeches of Paul and Barnabas are not given; *they* are only said to have "declared what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them." The result of all is thus stated: "Then pleased it the *Apostles and elders, with the whole Church,* to send chosen men, . . . and they wrote letters by them, &c." May we not fairly ask what evidence of conflict of opinion is there here? What trace

is there in the speech of Peter, or the speech of James, of the smallest sympathy with "certain of the sect of the Pharisees," of the least divergence in sentiment from Paul and Barnabas? Does not the literal statement of the historian go to show that the *whole Church* was unanimous against the "certain men which came down from Judea," and "the sect of the Pharisees"? And is it not equally clear that if the Apostle in the Galatians refers to this visit, he is giving an account of a different *event* occurring in it? He makes no mention of the Jerusalem Congress, because that did not really bear upon his point, but he alludes to other circumstances directly concerning himself, which tended to show the independence not only which he claimed, but which was on all hands conceded to him while at Jerusalem.

Neither is it true that in conceding the point of abstinence from food offered to idols, St. Paul was acting contrary to the tenor of his Epistles. He was rather giving practically an illustration of his own principles laid down in Rom. xiv. and 1 Cor. viii.

And whether or not there is any truth in saying, "It "is wholly improbable that he would have consented to "the position which the decrees give to abstinence from "fornication, since the principle is desecrated, to a cer- "tain extent, by its collocation," it is at least obvious that the First Epistle to the Corinthians is largely occupied with both these topics in chaps. v., vi., vii., and viii., and that singularly enough both are found in juxtaposition in one and the same verse, 1 Cor. vi. 13, "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body," and this too, although the Epistle was written "about ten years after the council" (p. 220).

7. "Did it imply no difference of belief, when it was "agreed that Paul should go to the heathen, while James,

"Cephas, and John were to be apostles of the circum-
"cision? Were the leading apostles and Paul agreed in
"the principle, even before the council, that both had the
"same gospel? Did both recognise the abrogation of
"circumcision for the Gentiles? Were they alike con-
"vinced in their hearts that Gentile-christianity was
"independent of Judaism? The answer must be in the
"negative. . . . We place more reliance on the epistle to
"the Galatians, and incidental particulars in the Acts of
"the Apostles, than upon the speeches put into the
"mouths of Peter and James at the council" (p. 220).

The only certain answer to these questions, since the authority and veracity of the Acts is impugned, must be drawn from St. Paul's Epistles. He says, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, *that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately* I conferred not with flesh and blood" (Gal. i. 15). Did this imply difference of belief, or a different sphere of action? "I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ *to the Gentiles*, ministering the Gospel of God. . . . Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation" (Rom. xv. 15. 20). Does this indicate a consciousness of difference in the message delivered? or does it imply a virtual identity, since in both cases Jesus Christ was the subject-matter of the preaching? "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided?" (1 Cor. i. 12).

We also find Peter sending his first Epistle by the hand of one of Paul's chosen companions, who appears in the superscription of both Epistles to Thessalonica, and identifying himself in respect of faith with Paul's own

converts, "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." "By Silvanus [2], a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (1 Pet. v. 12).

(The reader must bear in mind, however, that Dr. Davidson supposes the First Epistle of Peter to have been written by a Pauline Christian.)

Cf. 2 Cor. i. 24; Gal. v. 1; Eph. ii. 5, &c., &c.

We may observe, also, similarities between Peter's speech in the Acts and his first Epistle.

Acts xv. 7—11.	1 Pet. i. 1, 2.
Ye know how that a good while ago God *made choice* among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word (λόγον) of the Gospel, and believe.	Peter . . . to the strangers . . . *elect* according to the foreknowledge of God . . . through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, &c.
	i. 25.
	This is the word (ῥῆμα) which by the Gospel is preached unto you.
	i. 12.
And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.	The things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.
	i. 21, 22.
	That your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.
	ii. 16.
Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?	As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness.

[2] To be sure Renan says, "Il reste des doutes sur l'identité des deux personnages." Saint Paul, p. 122, note; and again, p. 289, note.

	i. 5. 9.
But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.	Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

It is at least remarkable that in a few brief words, such as those ascribed to Peter in the Acts, there should be so many traces of actual identity in thought. Whether or not the Epistle ascribed to Peter is his, it may at least be taken as a sample of what might have passed as his; and yet it would have been impossible to compile the speech in the Acts out of the materials of the First Epistle.

We may, perhaps, be warranted then in saying that it did on the evidence before us, "imply no difference of belief when it was agreed that Paul should go to the heathen," and the other Apostles to the Jews. On the contrary, if Paul really had a Divine mission, there is no shadow of doubt but that his mission was to the Gentiles; but if his mission was to the Gentiles, the mission of the other Apostles would of necessity be to the Jews. It showed, therefore, not a difference of belief, but a wise division of labour, when different spheres were chosen by Paul and Peter. Neither can we say that "Paul "speaks of the primitive apostles in depreciatory lan- "guage, in his epistle to the Galatians" (p. 220). For allowing that "whatever authority or reputation they "had, was to him a matter of indifference" (p. 218), it is plain that this depreciatory tone was forced upon him by the necessities of the case, and over against it, we not only have a right, but are in duty bound, to set his own famous words in 1 Cor. xv. 8, 9, "Last of all He was seen of me as of an *abortion*. For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God." And in Eph. iii. 8, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." To all who are not de-

termined to adopt another theory, these words will probably show that the language of the Epistle to the Galatians was not meant to be absolutely of a depreciatory character, but only a strong way of asserting the entire *equality* of his Apostleship. Cf. 2 Cor. xi. 22, "Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I."

For if Paul was the least of the Apostles, it is certain that no Apostles could have ranked, in his estimation, higher than Peter, James, and John. Indeed, even while in Galatians ii. he asserts his equality with these Apostles, the very prominence given to them both in i. and ii. shows that he had, and could have, no intention of depreciating them. It is surely unfair, then, to admit the evidence of the Acts against, but reject it in favour of, itself, to insist upon a "disputation in the council," when the speeches recorded are singularly unanimous, and when it is expressly said that the council itself was convened in consequence of the false teaching of "certain men" (they are not even called brethren), who were, probably, of "the sect of the Pharisees."

"Why did 'certain from James' lead Peter to a Judais-
"ing accommodation, if James fully believed in Paul's
"gospel of the uncircumcision?" The answer is, in all probability (see Alford's Note on Gal. ii. 12), because there were many Jews at Antioch, and the very object of this mission may have been to remind "the Jewish converts of *their* obligations, from which the Gentiles were free." James at the council appears to assume that the *Jews* will not consider themselves bound to accept the privilege of Gentile liberty, for this is what it comes to, Acts xv. 19. Cf. xxi. 18. But notwithstanding this, it is quite possible he may have "fully believed in Paul's "gospel of the uncircumcision." Nor is there the slightest evidence that he did not. As for Peter's conduct, it shows nothing more nor less than that charac-

teristic desire of standing well with all parties, especially the one he was directly thrown with, which had, indeed, been the cause of his triple denial of his Master[3].

8. "'If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of "Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou "the Gentiles to live as do the Jews.' How could Peter "*compel* the Gentiles to live like the Jews, if he had a "conviction of its being wrong and improper? It is "needless to talk of the compulsion of example, i. e. in-"direct compulsion, because the term is inapplicable to "that" (p. 221).

The answer is really contained in the words quoted, for if Peter, being a Jew, lived habitually after the manner of the Gentiles, it is plain that he could not be guilty of *compelling* the Gentiles to live like the Jews in any other way than by his example. Or, on the other hand, if it is preferred to throw the force of habit into the *compellest*, then the very fact that Peter, *for a time*, had lived at Antioch as a Gentile, exposed him equally to this charge of inconsistency made by Paul. And such an interpretation is the very utmost that the words describing Peter's conduct will bear; it being all the while sufficiently clear, from the whole tenor of the accusation, that he was now acting *contrary* to his usual practice, in refusing to eat with the Gentiles.

9. "Still further, the Acts say nothing of the efforts "made to procure Titus's circumcision, which Paul re-

[3] See here Professor Jowett's admirable note on Gal. ii. 11—21, Ep. vol. i. p. 243. M. Renan's portrait of Peter on this occasion is characteristic, and, on the whole, not untrue. "Cet homme, profondément bon et droit, voulait la paix avant tout; il ne savait contrarier personne. Cela le rendait versatile, du moins en apparence; il se déconcertait facilement et ne savait pas trouver vite une réponse. Déjà, du vivant de Jésus, cette espèce de timidité, venant de gaucherie plutôt que de manque de cœur, l'avait induit en une faute qui lui coûta bien des larmes. Sachant peu disputer, incapable de tenir tête à des gens insistants, dans les cas difficiles il se taisait et atermoyait. Une telle disposition de caractère lui fit encore cette fois commettre un grand acte de faiblesse." Saint Paul, p. 296.

"sisted. And how could Peter at Antioch have acted "contrary to the apostolic convention, or Paul have for- "gotten to appeal to its decisions when he rebuked Peter "there? Could not Peter have silenced the zealots who "came from James, with a reference to the transactions "which had taken place at Jerusalem, the resolutions of "the apostolic college, and the approbation of James "himself? What need had he to dissemble, or Paul to "rebuke him on his own responsibility?" (p. 222).

As for the circumcision of Titus many reasons may have operated or combined to induce the historian of the Acts to pass it over besides the one insinuated, and further than this we cannot go to prove that the one insinuated was not the only reason, or, in fact, was not a reason at all. Peter at Antioch did not act "contrary to the Apostolic convention," but declined to avail himself of its privileges; whereas had he eaten with the Gentiles "before that certain came from James," he would have done so without authority, had the narrative of the council or the conversion of Cornelius been unhistorical. How could a zealous Jew, as Peter is assumed to have been, have eaten with Gentiles at all, but for some very urgent motive constraining him to do so, such a motive as the mere example or influence of Paul could not have supplied; for if *that* motive be assumed, it is certain that nothing can be more contemptible than Peter's conduct; then it could not have consisted "in a want of firmness, clearness, and purity of conviction," but the divergence in the teaching and conduct of the two Apostles must have been far greater than even the school of Baur would have us believe. If we ask why Paul at Antioch did not appeal to the decrees of Jerusalem, we might as well ask why in disputing with *Peter* he did not appeal to the heavenly vision which he is related to have had in the case of Cornelius. To be sure, they may both have been unhistorical as we are asked to believe, but it is scarcely

reasonable to insist that he should appeal to one or the other before consenting to accept either; he may, indeed, have appealed to both, although he says nothing about it in the Epistle to the Galatians; at least we are not bound to assume that the Epistle can omit no particular which the Acts relates or *vice versa;* certainly, if such minute agreement had been found it would have carried with it a *prima facie* appearance of suspicious complicity. Thus much, at least, we may affirm, that on the evidence of the Epistle to the Galatians, St. Paul did not attach supreme importance to the decrees of the council, but why, indeed, should he if both Peter and he had been parties to the framing of those decrees?—if both considered themselves bound by the deeper principles which led to the framing of them, and of which Peter is reminded in Galatians ii.? And nevertheless, after all, the two cases were very different. The decrees of the council had nothing to do with the conduct of Peter; it was not necessarily touched by them. Peter may have fully recognised their validity and yet observed that social distinction out of deference to the prejudices of exclusive Jews, for which he is here rebuked, and if he could have done this, there would have been no need to confront "the zealots" with "the approbation of James himself." The "need he had to dissemble" arose from the fear of giving offence in a matter analogous to, but not identical with, that to which the Council of Jerusalem related.

XIII.

"It follows from these remarks, that the second visit of "Paul to Jerusalem, the eleemosynary one mentioned in "xi. 30, must be unhistorical. The apostle notices all "his visits to Jerusalem prior to the writing of the Gala-"tian Epistle (Gal. i., ii.). To have omitted any would

"have defeated the purpose he had in view; and, there-
"fore, the omission of the second, noticed in the Acts, is
"equivalent to its non-existence. . . . Barnabas may have
"gone with the contribution to the poor saints at Jeru-
"salem; Paul did not" (p. 222).

Then, I ask, what possible motive could the historian have had in saying, "Which also they did, and sent it to the elders (not Apostles) by the hands of Barnabas and *Saul*"? The answer assigned is, "to obviate the offence "that the four years' absence of the apostle from the "theocratic centre might have given to Jewish-christians" (p. 280). We are content to leave this reason for those who can honestly believe it to be more credible than the pure intention, on the part of the historian, of stating what was simply true. And if, as Dr. Davidson supposes, the book of the Acts was written as late as A.D. 125, what could have induced the fabricator, knowing, as he must have known, Paul's statement in the Epistle, to insert his name here, in direct violation of it? Is it not at least as likely that this being a very brief visit, as the Acts seem to imply, and one in no way relevant to his purpose, the Apostle made no allusion to it; or, if he did, is it not plain that we must adopt another method of reconciling the visits in the Epistle and the history than that which is commonly adopted.

XIV.

Speaking of the gift of tongues, as alluded to by St. Paul, and described in the Acts, Dr. Davidson says, "The one" (prophecy) "is an intelligible, the other" (tongues) "an unintelligible thing, proceeding from an "ecstatic state of mind, and rising to a height far above "the language of ordinary communication. If the narra-
"tive in the Acts be thus opposed to Paul's statements,
"it cannot be historical. The phenomenon may have had

"a basis in fact; the turn given to it is of a later "type. . . . . Its form and direction proceeded from "a symbolical design, the leading idea of the writer "being the Pauline universalism which appears in the "third Gospel. The new theocracy was not like the "old, restricted to one nation, but was meant to com- "prehend all peoples" (p. 223).

Again, we can only say that as upon the supposition the writer of the Acts must have been acquainted with the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the strange thing is, that having the framework he found in the Epistle, he should have distorted it into something quite different for which, as he knew, there was no foundation in fact, and which would be destined to wait till the nineteenth century after Christ, before it could hope to be interpreted or understood; for it is contrary to all evidence to suppose that had such been the writer's intention, any one of those for whom he wrote would have gathered from it such a notion; unless, therefore, he wrote for the school of modern critics, there was not the slightest hope of his ever being understood. It is, anyhow, not unnatural to suppose that as the gift of tongues recorded in the Acts was manifestly highly exceptional, so in process of time it might even vary in form, so that by the time when the First Epistle to Corinth was written, its form had become somewhat modified before its final disappearance, which must have occurred shortly after. We should, therefore, infer that, rather than believe the second chapter of the Acts unhistorical, it would be hardly possible to account for the phenomena presented in the Epistle, had there not previously occurred some such phenomena as those recorded in the Acts. We can understand the narrative in the Acts giving rise to the events related in the Epistle, but we cannot understand the latter as the origin of the story in the Acts. It would be equivalent to the reversing of a pyramid.

XV.

"The narrative in Acts xxviii. 17, &c., does not consist "with what we know of the Church at Rome, from "Paul's epistle to it" (p. 224).

Here again one can but repeat, that on the hypothesis this narrative must have been written in full knowledge of the state of the Church at Rome displayed by the Epistle to the Romans, and therefore in the event of an intentional imposition this circumstance must have presented a formidable difficulty to the historian. What, then, if the consciousness of the writer that he was stating only what was true was to him a sufficient means of surmounting it? For though in the latter case the difficulty may not have been perceived, it is scarcely possible to suppose that it would have been unobserved had there been in the historian a deliberate intention of misleading. It is to be observed that in this chapter of the Acts there are two parties directly spoken of, one is "the brethren" who came to meet Paul as far as Appii forum and The three taverns, who were obviously members of the Church at Rome, and not impossibly some of those enumerated in the list of salutations in Rom. xvi., and another "the Jews," of v. 17, who had received no official notice of Paul's coming, probably for the reasons assigned in Alford's excellent note on v. 21. But however this may be, there can be no question that the alleged discrepance is a circumstance that cuts both ways, and as it seems to me one that is even more difficult to explain on the hypothesis of the late origin of the Acts. It is further to be observed, that the enmity manifested at Jerusalem against Paul was of a kind likely to be satisfied by securing his absence, and less likely to be active in pursuing him even to Rome, and hence the ignorance of the Jews there of the details of his case. While, on the other hand, so far from its being false that he had committed nothing against the customs

of his fathers, it was his boast that instead of making void the law he established it through faith, for that Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth; in short, the very doctrine of justification, which is wrongly regarded as the distinctively Pauline doctrine, virtually underlay the whole framework and inspired the entire revelation of the law. Well and justly therefore might he say that he had "committed nothing against the people or customs of the fathers."

XVI.

It is alleged by Dr. Davidson that the speeches in the Acts are not those of the speakers to whom they are assigned. Peter says in i. 18, 19, that the field where Judas died was called in "their proper tongue, Aceldama," which he then translates, though speaking to his fellow-disciples. There are so many possible answers to this, that it need not detain us, see Alford; Roberts', Discussions on the Gospels, &c., &c.

"The account of Judas's death also disagrees with that "of Matthew in various particulars." It is quite possible to blend the two accounts so that one may supplement the other. For example, the chief priests had promised to give Judas thirty pieces of silver; on the faith of that promise he negotiated and concluded the purchase of a field, which was to be paid for on receipt of the money; meanwhile after receiving it, but before he had paid for the field, seeing that Jesus was unexpectedly condemned, Judas repents of what he had done, does not become possessor of the field, but takes back the money to the priests, throws it down in the Temple, and goes and hangs himself. The priests take the money, and buy with it the potter's field, possibly the identical field which Judas would have bought, it clearly being for sale. Judas,

having hanged himself, falls headlong, bursts asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gush out, and in consequence of either or of both events the field had the name of the field of blood till the day when the Acts were written. What is there improbable in any of the links here supplied? and if they are thus supplied, what is there contradictory in the two accounts?

"Perhaps, too, Peter would not have put together "two separate passages from the Old Testament, and "regarded them as a direct prophecy of Judas, contrary "to the proper interpretation (verse 20)."

Why is Peter less likely to have done so than the writer of the Acts? As a matter of fact the one has; *perhaps* the other might. And how are we, or any other persons, judges of what the "proper interpretation" is in this sense? We must *assume* the unreality of prophecy or of a secondary spiritual significance in Scripture, before we can affirm that *this* interpretation is improper. The mere affirmation does not prove it. And if it is right to *assume* the *unreality* against the evidence, it is not wrong to *assume* the *reality* on the strength of it.

XVII.

"The next address of Peter, in ii. 14—40, contains a "Pauline sentiment, that the heathen were embraced in "the Divine promise of favour. 'The promise is to you, "and to your children, and *to all that are afar off*, as "many as the Lord our God shall call.' But we learn "from the epistle to the Galatians that Peter had not "such ideas about the admission of the Gentiles to the "privileges of Christianity till long after; not till "Paul had privately explained the success of his work "among them" (p. 227).

It must be borne in mind that Dr. Davidson believes

the First Epistle of Peter to be a Pauline treatise (i. p. 426). We cannot therefore appeal to that in support of the above-named sentiment being really Peter's. But is it not an overstraining of the evidence to say that the Epistle to the Galatians represents Peter differently? Is not Paul his own witness that the Apostles at Jerusalem, including Cephas, gave unto him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship? And Professor Jowett says, i. 242, "It is a proof of the still unbroken unity of the Church, that the Jewish Christians were willing to receive, or the Gentiles to give alms. . . . Cf. Rom. xv. 27; 1 Cor. xvi. 1, ix. i;" and i. 241, "That the teachers in the two spheres were not wholly separated, is shown by several of the companions of St. Paul in his imprisonment being οἱ ὄντες ἐκ περιτομῆς, Col. iv. 11." Have we not also Paul's own witness that Peter did either habitually, or for a time at least, being a Jew, live as a Gentile? Does he not say, speaking of himself *and* Peter, "*We* who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, *knowing* that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ"? Here Paul *claims* Peter as one whose opinion on this vital point exactly coincided with his own. Besides we must not forget that much of the teaching of our Lord Himself clearly foreshadowed the ingathering of the Gentiles, so that it is conceivable that Peter may have expressed himself thus under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

"The machinery of visions and revelations introductory "to Cornelius's reception shows that the writer did not "conceive of Peter as a liberal Christian from the be- "ginning, else he would have emphasised his sentiments "more clearly in his first speech" (p. 227).

Would it not have been then more in accordance with this first conception to leave out altogether the words in italics, "*to all that are afar off*"?

"The caution, which must be attributed to him, if his

"liberal feelings respecting the Gentiles were real—the "insinuation of a corollary at the end of his two addresses "in a dexterous indirect manner (ii. 39; iii. 26), are "unlike the rash boldness of his character" (*ibid.*).

And yet at Antioch we see him guilty of weak and timid "vacillations." If these vacillations were neither weak nor timid, but the result of indecision and uncertainty as to the right course to pursue, they are still more unintelligible. For why should he have deviated from his usual habit at Antioch at all? Would not that have been "unlike the rash boldness of his character"? Any how, the words in iii. 26, "Unto you first God, having raised up His *Son* Jesus, sent Him to *bless* you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities," remind us of "Thou art the Christ, the *Son* of the living God," and the reply, "*Blessed* art thou, Simon Bar-jona," while the whole sentiment is in striking harmony with his own words recorded in v. 19, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." While the word *first*, if genuine, contains by implication the germ of the former sentiment, "*to all that are afar off*."—See also Alford *in loco*.

Dr. Davidson specifies several words which mark the speeches of Peter as the work of St. Luke himself, or the writer of the third Gospel. It may, therefore, be interesting to collect some of those which are not characteristic of St. Luke, e.g.—

ἐνωτίσασθε, v. 15, is used nowhere else in the New Testament, and may, therefore, have been used by Peter, as on the hypothesis we have none of his writings, especially as it represents the Hebrew he'ĕzîn.

μεθύουσιν, nowhere else in St. Luke, a different expression before, v. 13.

ἐκχεῶ, v. 17, used *three* times in *this speech*, is only used elsewhere by St. Luke in Acts xxii. 20.

ὁράσεις ὄψονται . . . . ἐνύπνια ἐνυπνιασθήσονται, only here, from Joel.

τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα, v. 19, not in the Gospel, only in the Acts.

ἀτμίδα καπνοῦ, only here, from Joel.

μεταστραφήσεται, v. 20, only here, from Joel.

ἐπιφανῆ, only here, from Joel.

ἀποδεδειγμένον, v. 22, this participle nowhere else in the New Testament.

ὡρισμένῃ, v. 23, this participle again in Peter's speech, x. 42, nowhere else in the Acts.

προγνώσει, also at 1 Pet. i. 2, nowhere else in the New Testament.

ἔκδοτον, nowhere else in the New Testament.

προσπήξαντες, nowhere else in the New Testament.

ὠδῖνας, v. 24, nowhere else in St. Luke.

ἠγαλλιάσατο, v. 26, from the Psalms. This verb occurs elsewhere, twice in St. Luke, once in the Acts, and *three times in the First Epistle of Peter*.

μάρτυρες, v. 32. Cf. i. 22; iii. 15; v. 32; x. 39. 41; 1 Pet. v. 1.

ὑψωθείς, v. 33. Cf. v. 31; 1 Pet. v. 6.

Without pressing this evidence too much, it undoubtedly goes to show that there is a very considerable element in this speech linguistically independent of St. Luke, and in some minor particulars corresponding to the language of 1 Peter. On the other hand, the expressions selected by Dr. Davidson are of slight value, for *διὰ χειρῶν*, *διὰ στόματος*, *ἄχρι τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης* are such manifest Hebraisms that they might well be used by any Jew, while *ἀσφαλῶς* (36) is only used once by St. Mark, and once by St. Luke besides, and *ἀσμενῶς* (14) nowhere else but in xxi. 17. Neither is it fair to say that "the language "of Luke also appears in what Peter says in v. 29—32, as

" is evident from κρεμάσαντες ἐπὶ ξύλου, v. 30, x. 39," seeing that it is *Peter* who is speaking in every place. Cf. 1 Pet. ii. 24.

XVIII.

Let us now take the speech of Peter in chap. iii.: "The God of our fathers hath glorified His Son" (παῖς, only here, and at 26 and iv. 27. 30, the Apostle's prayer, in which we can trace Peter's hand, and in iv. 25, of David) "Jesus." Cf. 1 Pet. i. 21. "Who raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory." ἀρχηγὸν, again by Peter, v. 31, nowhere else in the New Testament, except twice in the Epistle to the Hebrews. "Whom God hath raised from the dead." Cf. "that raised Him up from the dead," 1 Pet. i. 21. κατὰ ἄγνοιαν ἐπράξατε, v. 17. Cf. 1 Pet. i. 14, ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν, only twice besides in the New Testament. "But those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled," v. 18. Cf. 21, 22, and "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow," 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. Cf. also "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restitution of all things," with "And hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (cf. 1 Pet. i. 5; v. 1); and "When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord," with "That when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy," 1 Pet. iv. 13. The allusion also to the prophets "from Moses to Samuel, and those that follow after," finds its counterpart in the reference to "the prophets" generally, 1 Pet.

i. 10, in the double quotation from Isaiah, 1 Pet. i. 24, ii. 6, the example drawn from the obedience of Sara, iii. 6, and the longsuffering of God in the days of Noah, iii. 20. Cf. also Acts ii. 29. We are not at liberty to *assume* the genuineness of the First Epistle of Peter; but it is at least worthy of observation that a speech ascribed to him in the Acts should have so many points of incidental contact with an Epistle commonly received as his. Probably Dr. Davidson does not consider that both the Epistle *and* the speech proceeded from St. Luke[4].

XIX.

We come now to the speech in the fourth chapter, and the prayer of the Apostles, in which it is not improbable that the mind of Peter, as their spokesman, may be traced. It will be sufficient if we can discover points of resemblance between the several speeches of Peter, or between any one of them and his Epistles.

In the tenth verse there is the same brief summary as before, "Whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead," "And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead:" the same assertion in both, that the miracle was wrought through the *name* of Jesus; cf. 1 Pet. iv. 14, and one reading of iv. 16: the same virtual assertion of Jesus as the *exclusive* Saviour, iii. 23 and iv. 12. Notice also the fact that the word σωτηρία is used five times in the Epistles of St. Peter, as often, that is, as in any single Epistle of St. Paul; and that the Second Epistle of Peter five times couples the word σωτήρ with the name of Jesus Christ. Compare again the quotation from the Psalms, in v. 11, with those in Acts

[4] M. Renan speaks of the First Epistle of Peter as an "opuscule dont l'authenticité n'est pas impossible, et qui est en tout cas de l'âge apostolique." Saint Paul, p. xxiii.

i. 20; ii. 29; and above all with the famous words in 1 Pet. ii. 4, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious." This is, perhaps, nearly as much resemblance as we could expect to find in brief extracts taken from any one author, and possibly rather more than we could obtain in passages equally brief from different authors, of whom we know as little as we know of Peter. And as far as we can rely on evidence so purely internal and so slight, it goes to show, not only the accuracy and credibility of the writer of the Acts, but also the genuineness of, let us say, at least the First Epistle of St. Peter.

With respect to the prayer of the Apostles, vv. 24—30, we have again, in v. 25, a quotation from Psalm ii.; the word *παῖς* applied twice to Jesus, as in iii. 13. 26, as well as to David, who as the ancestor of Jesus, was God's *παῖς*, v. 25. The determination of God's counsel, v. 28, as before ii. 23. In v. 29 the word *ἀπειλή*, a rare word in the New Testament, was the expression of the very form which the threat took, v. 17, while *μετὰ παῤῥησίας λαλεῖν* was before, ii. 29, *εἰπεῖν μετὰ παῤῥησίας*. Lastly, "stretching forth Thy hand to *heal*," *εἰς ἴασιν* (once used by St. Luke), was the natural form that the request would take after a *σημεῖον τῆς ἰάσεως*, v. 22.

We come now to the words of "Peter and the other Apostles," in chap. v. 29—32, "We ought to obey God rather than men." Cf. the answer of Peter and John, iv. 19, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." It may be observed that in the First Epistle of Peter there are frequent injunctions to obedience in spite of suffering, e. g. i. 7; ii. 19; iii. 14—18; iv. 1, 12—19. This was the language of one who had "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer shame for His name."

Acts v. 30, 31.

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

Him hath God raised up to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Acts ii. 23.

Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.

iii. 14.

Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life.

iv. 10.

Whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

1 Pet. ii. 24.

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, &c.

ἀρχηγὸν καὶ σωτῆρα, as before, and in 2 Pet.

Acts iii. 13.

The God of our fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus.

ii. 33.

Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

ii. 36.

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

ii. 38.

Repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

1 Pet. iii. 22.

Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

Shall we say that this strong similarity, which is obvious

in the speeches of Peter, is the effect of accident, or of design, or of reality and truth? In ch. viii., in Peter's address to Simon Magus, v. 22, we have traces of the same teaching: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." We come now to the speech in

Acts x. 34—43.	1 Pet. i. 17.
Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.	And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work.
	ii. 17.
	Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. . . . For this is thankworthy, &c.
	Acts ii. 39.
The word (*τὸν λόγον*) which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all.)	The promise is unto you, and to your children.
	iii. 26.
	Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.
	iii. 20.
	He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.
	1 Pet. iii. 22.
	Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.
	i. 2.
	Grace unto you, and *peace*, be multiplied.
	v. 14.
	Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus.
That word (*ῥῆμα*), I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judæa, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached.	i. 25.
	And this is the word (*ῥῆμα*) which by the Gospel is preached unto you.

[Notice here in the Acts and the Epistle the use consecutively of λόγος and ῥῆμα, "being born again by the word (διὰ λόγου) of God."]

Acts i. 22.

Beginning from the baptism of John.

ii. 22.

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.

iv. 10.

Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

iv. 27.

Thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed.

1 Pet. v. 9.

Whom resist . . . knowing that the same afflictions, &c.

Acts i. 21.

And we are his *witnesses* of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree.

Of these men . . . must one be ordained to be a *witness* with us of his resurrection.

ii. 32.

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are *witnesses*.

iii. 15.

And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are *witnesses*.

iv. 29.

Grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.

v. 32.

And we are his *witnesses* of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto *witnesses* chosen before of God, even to *us*, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

1 Pet. v. 1.

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a *witness* of the sufferings of Christ.

Acts ii. 23.

Him . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up.

ii. 32.

This Jesus hath God raised up.

iii. 15.

And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are *witnesses*.

iv. 10.

By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead.

v. 30.

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

1 Pet. i. 3.

A lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

i. 21.

Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory.

iii. 18.

Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

[Cf. also for the truth of the statement, Acts i. 8. Ye shall be *witnesses* unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.]

1 Pet. iv. 5.

Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead . . . that they might be

judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

ACTS i. 16.

To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

This scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before, &c.

ii. 16.

This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.

ii. 25.

For David speaketh concerning him, &c.

iii. 18, 19.

Those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.

iii. 24.

Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

iv. 11.

This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders.

iv. 25.

Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said.

1 PET. i. 10, 11.

Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

The reader is now in a position to decide for himself how far this "address of Peter is altogether Pauline."

He has seen how frequently Peter speaks of himself and his fellow-Apostles as witnesses, μάρτυρες, to Christ. *It is a remarkable fact that St. Paul never calls himself a* WITNESS *of Jesus Christ in any one of his Epistles.* At Antioch in Pisidia, with wonderful accuracy, he speaks of "them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem," being "his witnesses unto the people;" and in Acts xxii. 15; xxvi. 16, he says that the Lord declared *he* should be a *witness*, but nowhere speaking in his own person does he use this expression of himself or his teaching. His usage of μάρτυς, μαρτυρεῖν and μαρτυρία, which is not frequent, is altogether different. Cf. Rom. i. 9; Gal. iv. 15; Col. iv. 13; Tit. i. 13. μαρτύριον he uses in Peter's sense two or three times only, e. g. 1 Cor. i. 6; 2 Thess. i. 10.

Here, then, at least is one important point in which this address is most manifestly *not* Pauline: it is the language of one who was an *eye-witness*, and not of one whose witness to Christ was of a spiritual nature. And if the writer fabricated these speeches, he took care to make them in this respect marvellously consistent and appropriate. Is it not possible, then, that there may be more accuracy in his report of them than some of us are inclined to think. If Dr. Davidson says that "'preaching peace "'by Jesus Christ,' &c., resembles Eph. ii. 17;" and that "the similarity between x. 26 and xiv. 15, x. 42 and xvii. "31, could hardly be accidental" (p. 229), Are we not entitled to say that a difference such as this can hardly be accidental? and that the strong likeness which pervades all the speeches of Peter, and even in its degree his First Epistle (for we will go no farther), can hardly be accidental? that it is very strong internal evidence of a real relationship, which marks them as the work of one and the same mind, and the kind of evidence which could not well be preconcerted? And if, on the other hand, which we do not deny, there are conspicuous instances of similarity with the Epistles of St. Paul (though instances not sufficient to

outweigh this), does it not go to show that the dissimilarity between the Apostles in their doctrine from the first was after all not so great as Dr. Davidson would desire us to believe?

We come now to the few words of Peter in

Acts xi. 14—17.	Acts ii. 21.
Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.	Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. (From Joel.)
	ii. 40.
	Save yourselves from this untoward generation.
	x. 43.
	To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins, &c., &c.
	i. 5.
Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.	John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.
	Matt. iii. 11.—Cf. Luke iii. 16.
	. I indeed baptize you with water, . . . but he that cometh after me . . . shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.
	John i. 26. 32, 33.
	I baptize with water. . . . I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but *he* that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.
	Acts ii. 38.
Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?	Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

v. 32.

And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

1 Pet. i. 2.

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

i. 12.

By them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

i. 22.

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, &c.

It is the more important to notice the above references to the Gospels, because Dr. Davidson remarks (p. 229), "'John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be bap-"'tized with the Holy Ghost.' The same statement is "made by Luke himself, Acts i. 5, which renders it highly "probable that the evangelist attributed the words of the "Baptist to Jesus incorrectly. None of the gospels assign "them to the latter, all to the former." If the third Gospel was written so late as the second century, as Dr. Davidson supposes, the writer of the Acts must have thus assigned them in the face of contrary evidence; and the Gospel of St. John, which according to him was later still, must again have gone counter to St. Luke in the Acts. Surely the view that must commend itself to common sense is that which men of common sense have hitherto ordinarily adopted, viz. that in such a case as this the Evangelists are sufficiently trustworthy. What must be the canons of a criticism which ever appears first to assume what it has to prove, and then employs the assumption as the basis of further inferences? Is there any reason why the sound

and salutary principle of English law, to believe the prisoner innocent till he has been proved guilty, should not obtain also in our criticism of the Bible? We are not bound on *a priori* grounds to assume that the Evangelists made use of falsehoods and misrepresentations in their narrative, though it is open to us to prove that they have done so, if we can. Till this is demonstrably the case it is more consistent with the maxims of fair play to allow them the benefit of the doubt.

XX.

"Let us now look at Paul's discourses. The first "recorded is that at Antioch (xiii. 16—41), the resem- "blance of which to those of Peter and Stephen is "sufficiently obvious."

This being, then, undeniably the case (partly perhaps to be accounted for from Saul's own recollection of Stephen's apology which no doubt made a deep impression upon him), it will be best to point out the *differences* between the speech at Antioch and the others. For a certain general similarity may be allowed if we can discover any intrinsic difference.

First, then, Paul begins, "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience." In chap. i. Peter begins, "Men and brethren." In chap. ii., "Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words;" afterwards at v. 22, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words;" and again at v. 29, "Men and brethren." At iii. 12, "Ye men of Israel." At iv. 8, "Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel." Stephen begins, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken." In x. and xi. Peter uses no form of introduction at all.

It is clear, therefore, that at Antioch there is at once similarity and difference in the style of address; and if

it be said that this is a small matter, we must bear in mind that the only data we have to go upon are the minute particularities of the language; take away these, and we are launched upon a sea without a shore, having ourselves neither a rudder nor a compass.

"The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers." There is no mention of this fact in the speeches of Peter nor in the apology of Stephen; but it is consistent with the teaching of him who in the Epistle to the Romans wrote the great chapters on election. "And exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm brought He them out of it." Here first of all there is no mention of the detailed history which occupies Stephen in his apology till v. 36. Then the expression "exalted," *ὕψωσεν*, is not used by Stephen, though it is twice used by Peter, of our Lord, in his speeches in the Acts.

The expression used by Stephen is "deliver" (vii. 25, 35), *σωτηρίαν*, *λυτρωτήν*.

"When they dwelt as strangers," *ἐν τῇ παροικίᾳ*. *πάροικος*, is twice used by Stephen: once in quoting the promise to Abraham, v. 6, and once of Moses, v. 29. Not at all by Peter in the Acts.

"With a high arm," not used by Stephen.

"And about the time of forty years suffered He their manners in the wilderness." Stephen says, "He brought them out, after that he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years." Peter makes no mention of it.

Acts xiii. 19, 20.	
And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.	There is no mention made of any of these facts by Stephen.

Acts xiii 21, 22.

And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

No mention of this by Stephen; but naturally mentioned by Saul of Tarsus, who was also "of the tribe of Benjamin" (Phil. iii. 5).

Stephen says of the tabernacle of witness, not mentioned by Paul, "which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David, who found favour with God" (Acts vii. 45, 46).

Here the similarity entirely ends. Stephen goes on to speak of the tabernacle and temple. Paul says, "Of this man's seed hath God, according to His promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." Peter had said on the day of Pentecost, using the same fact, but with a different purpose, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

The remainder of Paul's speech then from v. 23 to v. 41 has no parallel whatever in Stephen's apology. The similarity between the two is comprised in Acts vii. 36, and xiii. 17; Acts vii. 45, 46, and xiii. 22. Let the reader compare the two addresses, and the difference will be found more striking than the similarity. They are alike only in being historical recapitulations of God's dealings with His people. There must, therefore, be points common to both, but the points dwelt upon are different in the two. Paul leads his audience up to the seed of David,

Stephen to the temple of Solomon. Paul dwells only on the Exodus, the wanderings, the conquest, the dominion of the judges, the commencement of the monarchy in Saul and David. Stephen dwells upon the call of Abraham, the promise to Abraham, the birth of the patriarchs, the history of Joseph, the history of the nation in Egypt, the birth and personal history of Moses, the idolatry in the wilderness, and the fortunes of the tabernacle. Admitting that Stephen's apology suggested, as it may have done, the early part of Paul's sermon, is it not remarkable how greatly he has diverged from it? With regard to the latter portion of the speech at Antioch, Dr. Davidson says, "The second part (23—31) is analogous to the two "discourses of Peter in the 3rd and 10th chapters. The "next paragraph resembles Peter's first discourse (32—37). "Like Peter, Paul lays all emphasis on the resurrection, "not the death of Jesus, and uses the 16th Psalm in "proof of that resurrection" (p. 230).

We must set them side by side, in order that we may see the likeness and the difference.

Acts xiii. 23—31.

Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: when John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose. Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God,

Acts iii. 13—26.

The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom

Acts x. 34—43.

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) that word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judæa, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with

Acts xiii. 23—31.

to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead: and he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.

Acts iii. 13—26.

ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as

Acts x. 34—43.

power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

Acts iii. 13—26.

have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

The reader must judge for himself of the justice of the allegation made above, but possibly it may strike him that as both speakers on our hypothesis had but one topic of discourse, and the same facts to proclaim, the diversity in the treatment of them is, at least, as manifest as the unavoidable similarity.

The "second paragraph" and "Peter's first discourse" are as follows:—

Acts xiii. 32—41.

And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another Psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw cor-

Acts ii. 22—36.

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad;

Acts xiii. 32—41.

ruption: but he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

Acts ii. 22—36.

moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Paul speaks about "glad tidings" and the fulfilment of a promise (both of them specially Pauline ideas), which Peter here does not. Both quote the 16th Psalm, but each uses it in a different way. Paul quotes also the 55th of Isaiah, which Peter does not. Paul quotes also the 2nd Psalm, which Peter does not here quote at all, but which is used very differently by the disciples, and for another purpose, in Acts iv. 25. Peter speaks not

only of the resurrection but also of the ascension of Jesus, which Paul does not. Peter "speaks freely" of the patriarch David, which Paul does not. Paul speaks characteristically of the insufficiency of the Law of Moses, which Peter does not; and lastly, Paul speaks of the consequences of not closing with the Gospel, as he was wont to do (Romans x. 16, xi. 8; 2 Cor. iii. 14; 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16), but as Peter does not. The reader on this evidence must form his own decision, as also on the statement that "a Judaistic "tinge detracts from" the "true type" of the "genuine "Pauline doctrine" which is announced "but partially" in vv. 38, 39.

XXI.

We come now to the speech at Athens. "Notwith-"standing the difficulties inherent in the whole speech, ". . . we still think it is the speaker's to a considerable "extent" (p. 232).

The chief difficulty in Dr. Davidson's mind appears to be the abrupt mention of the resurrection, "a topic that "must have been revolting to his hearers." It seems to us that the mention of the resurrection is neither abrupt nor prominent. The climax of the Apostle's speech is the future judgment. The resurrection of Christ is introduced subordinately in proof of *that*. Seeing that direct mention of Christ's resurrection is found in almost every Epistle of St. Paul, we need not be surprised to meet with it here. It may perhaps be interesting to examine some of the linguistic features: σέβασμα in the New Testament, only here and 2 Thess. ii. 4; ἀγνοεῖν in the Acts, only here and in the speech at Antioch in Pisidia, xiii. 27, but fifteen times in St. Paul's Epistles, only four times elsewhere in the New Testament; εὐσεβεῖν, only here and 1 Tim. v. 4 in the New Testament; καταγγέλλειν often in the Acts, not at all in the Gospels, but seven times in St. Paul's Epistles; ὑπάρχειν frequent in the Acts, but eleven times in St. Paul's Epistles; χειροποίητος,

cf. Eph. ii. 11, and 2 Cor. v. 1; Col. ii. 11; καιρός, used by St. Paul thirty times, and often in this general sense; παραγγέλλειν, frequent in the Acts, used by St. Paul twelve times; οἰκουμένη, five times in the Acts, once in Rom. x. 18.

It may be doubted whether "a writer familiar with the "Pauline diction" (p. 235 *n.*) could designedly have secured such phenomena as these. Indications of similarity of thought between this speech and the Epistles have been already mentioned.

"The view of Christ presented in the 31st verse is "scarcely Pauline. It has indeed a certain analogy to "Rom. i. 4, as De Wette observes; but it is still too "prosaic and flat for the apostle. 'The man whom God "'hath ordained, whom he attested to all by raising him "'from the dead,' is more like the view in ii. 36; iv. 27; "x. 38, than the elevated one entertained by the "apostle respecting the person of Christ" (p. 231). With Rom. i. 4, we must bear in mind Rom. ii. 5—11; vi. 23; xiv. 10—12; 1 Cor. iv. 5; 2 Cor. v. 10; Gal. vi. 5. 7, 8; 2 Thess. i. 8, which all bear more or less directly on the doctrine of future judgment. Perhaps the reader will find it difficult to decide which of these passages is the more "elevated" one, and not less so whether strictly speaking any one of them is "prosaic and flat."

XXII.

In the address to the elders at Miletus, "The apostle's "discourse turns principally on himself, defending and "setting forth his own conduct. Even at the close of it "self is prominent. The hortatory element, which one "naturally expects is subordinate (verses 28, 31). How "could he thus recommend his own example instead of "Christ's?" (p. 233).

The Apostle's discourse turns principally on himself in Rom. vii. 7—25; xv. 15—32; 1 Cor. ii. 1—4, iv., ix.; 2

Cor. i., ii., x., xi., xii.; Gal. i., ii.; Phil. iii. 4—14; iv. 11—13; 1 Tim. i. 11—16; 2 Tim. i. 3. 11, 12; iv. 6—18," &c., &c. The hortatory element is subordinate even in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, and indeed we may say generally in the Pauline writings. We also find the following words: "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me," 1 Cor. iv. 16. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ," 1 Cor. xi. 1. "And ye became followers of us and of the Lord," 1 Thess. i. 6. "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God," ii. 14. "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you; not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us," 2 Thess. iii. 7—9. These extracts may possibly throw some light on the address at Miletus in regard to the particulars mentioned above.

"The strain of the discourse suits a later stand-point, "betraying one who looked at the apostle with re-"verential feelings, and believed that his great merits "had not found appreciation. It is unlikely that he "would say decidedly, 'I *know* that ye all shall see my "'face no more'" (p. 233).

If the stand-point was really so late as Dr. Davidson believes, it is very strange that the historian should not have carried his narrative down later than Paul's first visit to Rome. If his object was the reconciliation in men's minds of Paul and Peter, of the churches of the circumcision and the uncircumcision, of the two great parties as represented by their leaders, it is strange he should have given us no account of their end. They must have been persons obviously of sufficient interest to render this desirable; unless, indeed, his narrative created the interest in them which existed, which, as a matter of fact,

cannot have been the case, for then why should they have been selected to figure in the history? Again, if in point of fact St. Paul did visit the Asiatic Churches after this time, it is not likely that the writer of a narrative so circumstantial as the Acts, should not have taken care to ascertain it, in which case he would not have made his hero speak thus of seeing the Ephesian elders no more. The very circumstance that Paul is here made to say so goes a certain way to show that the book was written at a time when the course of events had not made it possible that, after all, his apprehensions might be falsified, or had not indeed falsified them. It is frequently asserted that the early Church was not critical, but to say so is to run counter to the evidence, if a work like this was the product of the second century, because there is enough of critical perception in it, on the hypothesis, to satisfy the requirements of a narrative purporting to be to a great extent personal, as well as generally speaking original and authentic. On the hypothesis the writer was enough of a critic to put into the mouth of his heroes speeches which might be consistent with their character and appropriate to their circumstances, and the evidence of so much criticism in him argues a corresponding amount of it in his readers. It is only the more critical discipline of our own criticism which has enabled us to detect a few slips and blemishes.

"The mode, too, in which the false teachers from among "themselves are spoken of, corrupters of Christianity "after his departure, is unlike the apostle. Nothing "definite is stated; no distinct trait is given to identify "them; the expressions are general and vague, such as "'speaking perverse things.' All this is natural from a "later person, referring to earlier things and avoiding "glaring anachronism; but it is unnatural in the mouth "of the apostle whose experience of opponents was not "new" (p. 234).

Then here was at once a critical discernment which saw partially what was appropriate, though at the same time it was inadequate to the true delineation of the character it had taken in hand to draw. The point of failure, however, must be allowed to be very much a matter of opinion. Some may possibly think that the historian evinces a more correct appreciation of his subject than the critic, or at least that the verdict of the latter is open to criticism. For the general vagueness complained of we may compare among St. Paul's enunciations of the future, Rom. xi. 23. 25—32; 1 Cor. vi. 3; vii. 29—31; xv. 28. 51—54; 1 Thess. iv. 14—17. It is very difficult to gather from these passages a clear and definite notion of that future of which the Apostle spoke. Neither is his description of existing teachers very intelligible in 1 Tim. i. 6—10, nor his prophecy of those to come in 1 Tim. iv. 1—3.

When we are told that "several Pauline expressions "adduced," "prove nothing" as to the authenticity of the speech "because the writer of the Acts was a Pauline "Christian" (p. 235), it is criticism which cuts away the ground from under our feet, for by what can we test this authenticity but by the known writings of St. Paul? The canons of such criticism are mainly two:—

1. Determine the authenticity of any writing by the internal evidence it affords.

2. Ignore such evidence when it goes to disprove any foregone and arbitrary conclusion.

If this address has certain features peculiar to St. Luke, we might not unnaturally infer that, without fabricating, he had moulded it. If it has certain elements characteristic of, or peculiar to, St. Paul, we might also be forgiven for supposing that they were evidence of its substantial agreement with the mind of the Apostle; and whether or not "the writer" "had written notes "or a traditional sketch of the speech, which he freely

"reproduced," we might believe, in the absence of conclusive evidence to the contrary, that he had fairly and sufficiently represented the main features of the occasion and the main heads of St. Paul's discourse.

It may be interesting to notice the following correspondences between this address and the Epistles of St. Paul, which, perhaps, were scarcely within the reach of a Pauline Christian to effect, unless he was endowed with a larger share of critical perception than we can venture to suppose likely.

Acts xx. 18—35.	1 Thess. ii. 1. 9.
Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons.	For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain. . . . For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of God.
	2 Cor. i. 5.
Serving the Lord with all huility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews.	For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.
	1 Thess. ii. 14.
	For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judæa are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews.
	2 Cor. viii. 10.
And how I kept back nothing taht was *profitable* unto you.	And herein I give my advice: for this is *expedient* for you. [Same word in both cases.]
	Rom. i. 16; ii. 9, 10.
Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.	To the Jew first, and also to the Greek. . . . Of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. . . . To the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

Rom. viii. 1.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2 Cor. i. 8, 9.

And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: but we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.

Rom. viii. 35.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, &c.

2 Cor. iv. 16.

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

2 Tim. iv. 6, 7.

I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

2 Cor. iv. 1.

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not.

Eph. iii. 8.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

2 Cor. vii. 2.

Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.

Gal. vi. 5.

For every man shall bear his own burden.

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

EPH. iii. 9, 10.

To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.

COL. iv. 17.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

1 TIM. iv. 16.

Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

EPH. i. 7.

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

COL. i. 14.

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

2 THESS. ii. 3, 4. 9, 10.

That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. . . . Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Therefore watch (γρηγορεῖτε), and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to *warn* every one night and day with tears.

2 Tim. iv. 5.

But watch (νῆφε) thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

Col. i. 28.

Whom we preach, *warning* every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

Col. ii. 6.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught.

i. 12.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

1 Cor. ix. 12. 15.

I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

1 Cor. iv. 12.

Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

And labour, working with our own hands.

1 Thess. ii. 9.

For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of God.

2 Thess. iii. 8—12.

Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with

I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

The reader must form his own judgment upon these parallelisms which it would be easy to multiply. Certain it is that almost every statement at Miletus has its counterpart in one of the Pauline Epistles, and yet the difference between the two is such, that the likeness could scarcely have been the result of designed imitation. Perhaps, therefore, we may not unreasonably conclude that we have here given in the language of Luke the substance of a speech as it was actually delivered by Paul, and not an imaginary or fictitious address suited merely to the idea of the occasion. And if this is so, we may, perhaps, think also that the hypothesis which brings the narrator nearest in time to the speaker is the one most consistent with probability.

XXIII.

"The discourses of Paul in chapters xxii. and xxvi. "narrate the circumstances attending his conversion and "apostolic call to the Gentiles, and are substantially the "same as the prior account in the 9th chapter. The "three coincide in language and style, showing that they

"proceed from the same writer. All exhibit unhistoric "elements, especially the first. The second agrees with "the first in making Paul go to Jerusalem to the apos- "tles immediately after his conversion, contrary to the "epistle to the Galatians. The second states that the "apostle had a vision of Christ in the temple; and the "third agrees with the first in stating that he preached "in Jerusalem and Judæa, soon after his embracing "Christianity. Besides xxii. 20 alludes to vii. 58; viii. 1, "and the words which Jesus addresses to Ananias in a "vision, in the 9th chapter, are spoken to the apostle "himself in a vision (xxii. 21). The expression, too, in "xxii. 16, 'be baptized and wash away thy sins,' &c., is "inappropriate in the mouth of Ananias at that time" (p. 235).

Why so? Was there any reason why Saul's baptism should be delayed? Was not baptism the indispensable initiatory rite? 1 Cor. i. 13—17; Col. ii. 12; Titus iii. 5. Had this expression been inappropriate in the mouth of Ananias at that time, there is every reason to believe that the "Pauline Christian" who wrote the Acts would have had the requisite discernment to abstain from inserting it. Even assuming the origin that Dr. Davidson assigns to this book, one, namely, of partial imposition and forgery, there is every reason to believe that the writer would not have violated proprieties of this kind, for in so doing he would have defeated his presumed object. With regard to the unhistoric elements of the three narratives, we must bear in mind that there are two ways of approaching the study of them, and each involves an assumption which it is impossible to avoid.

1. In the belief that every discrepance is proof of inherent unsoundness and want of veracity in the narrative.

2. In the belief that all discrepances can be more or less explained and reconciled.

The assumption implied in the first repudiates every

attempt to account for differences of statement, the critic being already persuaded that the narrative is not and cannot be true. The assumption involved in the second allows to the imagination sufficient scope to conceive of circumstances not contrary to the letter of the narrative which, without modifying, may serve to put it in another light. If the accounts can be harmonised, then the differences in them become an additional evidence of their truth. We are bound not to reject the narrative till all attempts of this kind have completely failed. We are bound not to suffer an assumption that the narrative is untrue to interfere with any endeavour to harmonise the different accounts, for if so, we shall be uncritical. A Chinese puzzle is capable of one solution; if we assume it to be so, we may eventually succeed in discovering what the solution is. If we start with the assumption that there is no solution, that alone will be fatal to the discovery of any; and, indeed, as long as we retain it, may possibly dispose us to reject the true solution when found. And it is not really otherwise in the case of two or more narratives which profess equally to give a true account of the same transactions. On this principle, then, some of the objections above have been already met. Neither the second account, nor the first, necessarily makes "Paul go to Jerusalem to the apostles imme-" diately after his conversion, contrary to the epistle to " the Galatians," but rather the reverse. It is more consistent with the letter of the narrative, certainly in the first case, and it is not inconsistent with it in the second, to suppose the contrary. The deficiencies of one account must be supplied by the details of another, and there is nothing uncritical in this, but it is precisely what we should do in any similar case that happened in ordinary life. Nay, it is what we should use our critical faculties especially for in all cases where we were not hindered from doing so by a preliminary discredit attaching to the

subject-matter in hand. To enter upon inquiries such as these, however, with a preliminary discredit of this kind, would be the gravest possible offence against the spirit and the canons of criticism.

Had the writer not been conscious that he was speaking the truth, no one could have been more alive than he to the apparent discrepances of his narrative, which consequently are thereby shown to be no discrepances. It is little better than wantonness to confound the words spoken to Ananias, and those addressed to Saul in ix. 15 and xxii. 21, or to find in Paul's own allusion to the part he had taken against Stephen, a reason for believing the speech containing it to be fictitious, xxii. 20.

XXIV.

In Stephen's apology, "The divergences from the Old "Testament are numerous. In some of them Stephen "probably followed current Jewish traditions; hardly in "all. A man of his knowledge and faith could scarcely "have made so many historical mistakes; but they might "have been owing to the incomplete materials which "the writer possessed—materials derived from one who "lived near enough the time of the events to furnish a "faithful outline of the argument followed by Stephen" (p. 236).

Any how, as the mistakes are made, or the divergences do exist, either Luke or Stephen must have made them; it matters but little who is responsible for them, and the choice lies between believing Stephen's knowledge to have been imperfect or his memory deceptive, and supposing that Luke would have committed to writing a discourse so inaccurate, of which the discredit would naturally reflect upon the supposed speaker whom his narrative tended to glorify. It seems hard to believe that sixty or seventy

years after the death of Stephen any one could have furnished "a faithful outline of the argument followed by" him.

"We do not affirm that the speeches to which we "have been referring are entirely supposititious in their "contents and style. It is enough to maintain that they "evince the hand of him that wrote the whole book. "The general writer had at least a share in their produc- "tion, so that their authenticity can only be held in a "qualified sense. The speakers did not utter them as "they now are. . . . . Criticism disproves the idea that "they were really in substance, and mostly in the very "words, uttered as written. The unhistorical element is "too apparent to warrant more than partial authenticity" (p. 237).

This is equivalent to saying that the speeches are not supposititious, and they are not genuine; they are not historical, and they are not untrue. Without wishing to deny the hand of the writer in them, there seems no reason to disbelieve that they give a fair representation of what was actually said and done on the various occasions. All that we have to be jealous of is wilful perversion and deliberate falsification. So long as the writer cannot be convicted of this, his value as an historian remains. It seems at times as if Dr. Davidson were endeavouring to fix upon him no less a charge than this. He misrepresented facts for a special purpose, which his recent critics have been acute and happy enough to discover.

XXV.

"We are reminded, however, that the discourses of "Peter resemble one another, having so much internal "likeness as to show their common origin in the same "person. Not only their ideas, but even their phrases

"and modes of expression, it is said, are similar and "analogous to the recognised peculiarities of Peter "in his first epistle. . . . . The idea that while the Jews "believed they had destroyed Jesus they had been in- "strumental in exalting Him to glory, recurs in Peter's "addresses, ii. 23, &c.; iii. 13, &c.; v. 30; x. 39. Com- "pare with the passages that express the idea of Jesus "suffering by the determinate counsel of God, 1 Pet. i. 2. "20; ii. 4. 6. The antithesis between the purpose of "the Jews to annihilate the Redeemer and His glorious "resurrection occurs in 1 Pet. i. 19, &c. But the same "idea is in xiii. 27, &c. Psalm cxviii. 22 is quoted only "in Acts iv. 11 and 1 Pet. ii. 7, where it is applied to "Christ. . . . . It cannot be denied that the Petrine "discourses differ perceptibly from the Pauline in ideas "and phraseology. . . . . But is there any proof of "their proper authenticity in all this?" (p. 238).

Perhaps it would be more to the point to ask What would Dr. Davidson consider to be "any proof of their proper au- "thenticity"? Is it not reduced very much to a mere matter of opinion, which, instead of being based upon facts, is made to be the foundation of them? It cannot be denied that there are certain features peculiar to the discourses of Peter in the Acts; these features are more or less common to all of them. By these features they are distinguished from the discourses of Paul, and the First Epistle of Peter is observed to be characterised to a certain extent by these same features. If these features are such as would not readily be copied by an imitator, or even observed and noticed by a writer who, on the hypothesis, was not critical, do they not at least go to show that in the absence of all direct evidence to the contrary, there is a certain *prima facie* ground for believing that the speeches ascribed to Peter are genuine? It is not likely that any writer wishing to imitate Peter, or to fabricate a speech that might pass for Peter's, would quote, as it is quoted in

Acts iv. 11, a Psalm that had been made use of in 1 Pet. ii. 7. But, on the opposite hypothesis, as Dr. Davidson places Peter's First Epistle as early as A.D. 80, it rather makes against his theory of its authorship to suppose that the writer of the Acts in A.D. 125 would quote in iv. 11, from an Epistle which was not Peter's, in order that his own speech might pass for Peter's. This would be very like contemporary or sub-contemporary evidence to Peter's authorship of the Epistle. On the other hand, it is unlikely that the writer of the Epistle would make such a use of the Psalm as this, because Peter had so used it in a speech in the Acts; at least that would be to make the Acts many years earlier than we are asked to believe it can have been. Surely the more reasonable course is to register as a fact the identity of thought in the two documents, and to draw such inferences from it as the nature of our own minds and our own critical discernment may enable us to draw. As for the antithesis between the Redeemer's death and His glorious resurrection, that seems too obvious a thought to bear the strain here put upon it. Certainly the same idea is found not only in Acts xiii. 27, but also in Phil. ii. 8, 9; Heb. xii. 2, &c.

XXVI.

"In the apostle's apology before the Jews, xxii. 1—32, "not a single expression peculiarly Pauline occurs. The "whole is in Luke's manner, so much so that various "words employed by the evangelist alone are found here, "as *συνεῖναι, αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ, εὐλαβής*, &c." (p. 239).

We have no wish for one moment to deny the share that St. Luke had in recording these speeches of St. Paul. The only question is, Whether or not they are sufficiently accurate to represent him fairly and rightly. Let us take, then, this particular speech and compare it with the

Pauline Epistles. It must be borne in mind, however, that he is here giving an account of his conversion which, therefore, as far as it was by the hand of Luke, ought to have corresponded with the narrative in chap. ix. This, however, it is alleged that it does not do.

Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you (*ἀπολογία*, the verb occurs twice in St. Luke, six times in the Acts, once in Rom., and once in 2 Cor.).

1 Cor. ix. 3.

Mine answer to them that do examine me is this (*ἀπολογία*, only twice in the Acts, five times in St. Paul's Epistles, once in St. Peter).

I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day (*ζηλωτὴς ὑπάρχων* only here and Gal. i. 14).

2 Cor. xi. 22.

Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.

And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

Phil. iii. 5, 6.

Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church.

Rom. x. 2.

I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

Gal. i. 13, 14.

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

1 Tim. i. 13.

Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious.

Rom. x. 2.

As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders, &c. (μαρτυρεῖ).

For I bear them witness, &c.

2 Cor. viii. 3.

For to their power, I bear record, &c.

Gal. iv. 15.

For I bear you record, that if it had been possible, &c.

Col. iv. 13.

For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, &c.

(But there are no other instances like these.)

Gal. i. 15.

The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace.

1 Cor. ix. 1.

Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?

xv. 8.

Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

Rom. iii. 26.

To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

1 Cor. xi. 23.

And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, &c. Cf. xv. 3.

Col. ii. 11.

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism. Cf. Rom. vi. 4—6.

Rom. x. 12.

The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him, &c.

1 Cor. i. 2.

With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.

2 Tim. ii. 22.

With them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

The reader may, perhaps, think that there are here, for a speech of this kind, as many points of contact with St. Paul's Epistles as one naturally could expect; he must draw his own inference from them. While the absence of similar phraseology is no proof of difference of authorship, a spontaneous and undesigned similarity of thought, especially when exhibited under considerable difference of circumstances, is no slight evidence of identity of authorship. Such similarity is perceptible here.

Dr. Davidson asks, "How could Peter declare it *unlaw-*"*ful* for a Jew to keep company with and come in to one "of another nation (x. 28)?" The only answer to this question is that the writer of the Acts, whoever he was, must have known how far this statement was correct, and that it was correct is shown by its being made; for the motive assigned for the composition of this book by the writers of the Tübingen school would not have led the author to exaggerate the Judaism of Peter, but on the contrary, to tone it down. Alford in his note refers to Juv. xiv. 103, and Tac. Hist. v. 5. We must bear in mind that the Greek is κολλᾶσθαι ἢ προσέρχεσθαι.

"In like manner, the statement of Gamaliel about "Theudas is inaccurate, and does not proceed from the "speaker (v. 36). The insurrectionist of that name ap-"peared in the reign of Claudius, about ten years after the "delivery of the speech; as we learn from Josephus, whose "description agrees exactly [?], sometimes even ver-

"bally, with the notice of Theudas in the Acts, so that no "other could have been meant. The anachronism belongs "to the writer of the book, not to Gamaliel" (p. 242). Is it not possible that it may belong to Josephus? See Alford. Or failing that, is it impossible that Josephus may have left out this Theudas? Must we necessarily jump to the conclusion that one author has made a mistake because, as it happens, we have not the means of verifying him, and because he is at variance with another author? Are there no discrepances between Tacitus and Suetonius, none between Lingard and Hume? In this case, as before, the writer was open to the judgment of the public for whom he wrote. There were probably among his earliest readers men whose memories were not less accurate than his own, men by whom in a point of recent history he could be detected if in error.

XXVII.

The objections raised against the historical narratives are of a somewhat different character, and demand a different method of treatment from those above. When we are told that the conclusion that "the narratives" "are "partly unhistorical" is one that is "justified by every "impartial consideration," we may be quite sure that there is a spirit in operation which it is very hard if not quite impossible to satisfy. The impartiality spoken of points to actual hostility rather than to strict neutrality. It is an impartiality which is bent upon raising objections, and will refuse to admit any explanation, however reasonable, rather than renounce the privilege and forego the luxury of doubt. If a man is determined to think, e. g. that the two statements about Saul's conversion, that the men who were with him heard the voice and did *not* hear it cannot be reconciled, it is hopeless attempting to reconcile them.

To him the probability of the writer being false is greater than any probability which will serve to show that after all it is possible he may have been true. If he is resolved to make such a statement as that a *casus belli*, then it is obvious on the surface that it must remain so, for nothing can remove the written difficulty, however naturally it may admit of explanation[b]. But let no one suppose that such a course is alone worthy the name of criticism, for it is possible that the truly critical mind may be that which detects the real agreement beneath the apparent discrepance. The ingenuity of the true critic is displayed not so much in clinging tenaciously to a flaw as in deciding what amount of contradiction is sufficient to invalidate testimony. It is the business of the judge to strike the balance between conflicting evidence, and not to throw the whole weight of his influence on one side, nor to disregard the points of agreement in his eagerness to detect a flaw. Allowing all due importance to these contradictory statements about St. Paul's conversion is all the evidence for it exhausted? Is it altogether improbable that a character so highly exceptional should have been the subject of phenomena no less exceptional? Is it absolutely unlikely that a particular crisis of his life through which he must have passed should have been marked by some strange outward incidents the account of which has been preserved to us in this form? Even accepting the cases of Ignatius

[b] It has been suggested that the difference between *hearing*, and *hearing so as to understand* or *to obey*, is indicated by the case which accompanies the verb: that ἀκούω with a genitive is simply *to hear*, and with an accusative *to hear so as to understand*, or *to act upon what is heard:* and if this can be substantiated, the alleged discrepance vanishes at once; for the narrative says, "hearing a voice" (gen.), "but seeing no man," and the speech "they heard not the voice" (accus.) "of him that spake to me," that is, they were unconscious of its meaning. This is sometimes the usage of ἀκούω in the New Testament, e. g. Luke vi. 17. 47; Matt. xiii. 18, &c.; but by no means uniformly, e. g. Matt. xiii. 19; Luke xvi. 29; vii. 9, &c. Still doubtless there is a difference intended to be conveyed in these two instances, and that, in all probability, the difference expressed above and assumed in Lect. ii. p. 33.

Loyola and Colonel Gardiner, given by Dr. Davidson, as parallel instances, which the discerning critic must see they are not, shall we say that they help us to understand the conversion of St. Paul, or that the case of St. Paul helps us to understand them? Any case of remarkable conversion is intelligible after St. Paul's, unintelligible before, and unintelligible without it. We can imagine a person believing himself the subject of visions and ecstatic revelations *after* the history of St. Paul; but *this* gives us no account of *that* history, for what was the prototype of *that?* There is nothing like it in the Old Testament; there is nothing like it in the New. And no person of strictly critical mind can for a moment suppose it may be paralleled by any thing in Greek or Roman history. We have not, therefore, accounted for the conversion of St. Paul, even though we have placed it in the category of Jesuit visions or of Puritan dreams. There is something still unexplained: for be it so that the psychological revolution acted sensibly on the physical organs, even this, on the hypothesis, goes to show that matter is subject to the influence of mind to a degree beyond the operation of any known law. And if this is an admitted fact, why should not the material universe be subject to the influence of the Divine mind to an extent beyond the operation of any known law, or even in visible defiance of known laws. Allow that the psychological revolution in Paul's mind, that "a spiritual revelation of Christ to the "higher self-consciousness" (p. 247), did produce the apparent miraculous phenomena which, however, were of course not miraculous, then what produced the psychological revolution? Criticism demands an answer to this question, and has no right to be satisfied till she has obtained one. It is not enough to say, "former experiences in his own "mind, and the death of Stephen, had probably prepared "him for such internal revelation of the Redeemer," because if criticism is to rest on probabilities, it has no

advantage over faith, and, in fact, ceases to be criticism. Besides, what do we know of these experiences, and how were they produced? Were they purely accidental, or had "the Redeemer" any thing to do with them? If they were purely accidental, and confessedly, we cannot ascertain their law, then they cease to be worthy subjects of our studious attention, they become matters of idle speculation, not of useful criticism; but if "the Redeemer" had any thing to do with them, then they become matters of surpassing interest, because proofs of the operation of an energising Mind, of a personal Will at work in the secret recesses of the unseen world, of the action of a controlling Spirit upon spirit who, if able to control and direct spirit, to set in action the laws of spirit according to the design and motion of his own will, may, after all, be able to do something analogous to this with the laws of matter. Either the conversion of Saul was in obedience to irresistible spiritual law, or it was not; either it obeyed an unvarying, inevitable principle, or it did not; if it did, then it was something different from what we are asked to believe it to have been; if it did not, then it is a constant witness to us of so much personal agency in the realm of spirit as may not unfairly become the basis for believing in a corresponding personal agency in the realm of matter. If "it is best to conceive of the whole process "of Paul's conversion as an inward operation," we must at least determine how far it was brought about in defiance of himself; how far, as a mere change of mind, it is only just worth registering like a change of wind and nothing more. Perhaps a small critical minority may still believe that our Lord went as near to the bottom of this matter as it is given to any of us to go, when He said, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: *so* is every one that is born of the Spirit." And possibly the historian of the Acts was not wrong, when, on authority he believed to be sufficient, he said a voice

was heard from heaven to say, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" and a voice on earth replied, "Who art Thou, Lord? What wilt Thou have me to do?" At least we are asked to *believe* this. If we believe it, we shall not doubt it; if we doubt it, we shall not believe it. One or the other is inevitable, but the two are incompatible, they cannot co-exist[6]. It is essential to bear this in mind when

[6] M. Renan's view of St. Paul's conversion is well worthy of notice if only for its ingenious audacity:—"Si Paul trouva là des visions terribles, c'est qu'il les portait en son esprit. Chaque pas qu'il faisait vers Damas éveillait en lui de cuisantes perplexités. L'odieux rôle de bourreau qu'il allait jouer lui devenait insupportable. Les maisons qu'il commence à apercevoir sont peut-être celles de ses victimes. Cette pensée l'obsède, ralentit son pas; il voudrait ne pas avancer; il s'imagine résister à un aiguillon qui le presse. La fatigue de la route *, se joignant à cette préoccupation, l'accable. Il avait, à ce qu'il paraît, les yeux enflammés, peut-être un commencement d'ophthalmie. Dans ces marches prolongées, les dernières heures sont les plus dangereuses. Toutes les causes débilitantes des jours passés s'y accumulent; les forces nerveuses se détendent; une réaction s'opère. Peut-être aussi le brusque passage de la plaine dévorée par le soleil aux frais ombrages des jardins détermina-t-il un accès dans l'organisation maladive et gravement ébranlée du voyageur fanatique. Les fièvres pernicieuses, accompagnées de transport au cerveau, sont dans ces parages tout à fait subites. En quelques minutes, on est comme foudroyé. Quand l'accès est passé, on garde l'impression d'une nuit profonde traversée d'éclairs, où l'on a vu des images se dessiner sur un fond noir †. Ce qu'il y a de sûr, c'est qu'un coup terrible enleva en un instant à Paul ce qui lui restait de conscience distincte, et le renversa par terre privé de sentiment." Les Apôtres, pp. 178—180.

* "De Jérusalem à Damas, il y a huit fortes journées."

† "J'ai éprouvé un accès de ce genre à Byblos; avec d'autres principes, j'aurais certainement pris les hallucinations que j'eus alors pour des visions." To this we reply that there is no evidence of Paul having been "privé de sentiment;" and that whereas M. Renan lived to know that his "visions" were "hallucinations," the whole current of Paul's future existence was changed in such a way as never to relapse into its former channel by the marvellous "vision" vouchsafed to him, which therefore was and could have been no "hallucination." In the Lectures, I have assumed that Saul and his companions were on horseback: there is, indeed, no ground for this in the Acts; and M. Renan supposes them to have been on foot, a supposition which is more or less essential to his view, because he makes the fatigue of the journey an important element in producing the vision. To me it seems more probable that so long a journey would not have been performed on foot. Cf. Acts xxiii. 24. But however this may be, the position I have endeavoured to maintain remains the same.

we are told that "these minor differences, which do not "admit of reconcilement, awaken suspicion against the "perfect credibility of the narrative. The reader, far "from seeing in them a convincing proof of its simple "truth, as if inaccuracy in reporting details certified "accuracy in the main points, will infer an interval of time "between the historian and the events he records." Such may possibly be the attitude of criticism, but let us clearly understand that it cannot possibly co-exist with sympathy in the writer's point of view, because, whether or not his narrative is true, there is no question as to what that point of view was. In rejecting his narrative, therefore, we repudiate all actual identity with his *animus*. We do not *feel with him*. We may fancy we see what he *means;* but we certainly do not feel with what he *says*, because the point of what he says does not turn upon any minor difference of statement, but upon something deeper.

Moreover, it seems at least likely that had an interval of sixty or seventy years occurred between the historian and the events he recorded, his narrative, instead of being so minute would have been somewhat more indistinct and hazy, it would have been less vivid, less circumstantial. And as it is certain that the minor differences in narrative which are patent to the reader, could not have escaped the observation of the *writer*, the very fact of their existence is an indication of purity of intention in him. The affectation of simplicity he is supposed to have assumed would assuredly evince sufficient art to have preserved him from incurring such a risk of detection as this. If he was an artless writer, the slight differences are accounted for; but if skilled and accomplished, as on the supposition he must have been, one is at a loss to account for them. Besides, if the conversion of St. Paul was a merely inward fact, to what cause or causes can be assigned, in the space of sixty years, such a concrete development of it as the three narratives uniformly present? In the period of two genera-

tions it had passed completely out of one sphere, that of the merely spiritual and internal, into another and an opposite one, the physical, the sensible, the outward. Is this likely, and at such a time?

Again, how is one to deal with statements like the following: "The description of the primitive believers "at Jerusalem is partly ideal. The writer states that "they had a community of goods, ... A small part "of the people only could have done so" (p. 243).

"As to the death of Ananias and Sapphira, it is evi- "dently set forth as the miraculous, instantaneous effect of "Peter's words. This with the harshness of the divinely "inflicted punishment, which is out of character with "the gospel history, prevents the critic from accepting "the fact as historical, at least in the way it is told. "The nucleus of it may be so" (p. 244).

As there is evidence from the book itself that this feature of the early Church had been lost long ere the close of it, perhaps some critics may come to the conclusion that that fact alone gives a *prima facie* confirmation to a statement such as this occurring in its earlier chapters, and referring to the most primitive period of its history. If otherwise, however, it is obvious that there is and can be no answer to an *ipse dixit*, but the rudest and the feeblest of all, namely, a flat contradiction.

Also when we bear in mind that the infant Church was supposed to be under the special care of Divine Providence, and that it was pre-eminently needful that at such a time the righteousness and purity of the Divine government should be fully vindicated, we may even think that we can discern an evidence of supreme wisdom in the severity of the punishment inflicted. We have surely no business to assume that our own knowledge of the character of the Gospel is more trustworthy than that of a writer who in other respects has manifested an acquaintance with it so profound. His statement must be criticised

on its own basis. Was there any meaning in the fact *if* it was really what he supposed it to be?

When we are told that "the book of the Acts is "thickly studded with the miraculous," and that this circumstance "may lead a reader to reject it" (p. 244), we are surely taken off the region of pure criticism, because if we start with the foregone conclusion that testimony to the miraculous *must* be false, no document, even *if* true, can critically stand its ground. The question is whether or not a document *recording miracles* is true, because if such a document must necessarily be false, there is an end to the function of criticism, which is to determine *under the circumstances* which documents are credible and which are not. Our business as critics is to decide whether, *leaving out the miraculous*, this narrative is historically true, and having decided this, then to determine whether the circumstances being what they are supposed to be, the testimony to the miraculous occurrences is such as to merit confidence. If we are already persuaded that the Almighty has never made use of the miraculous in dealing with mankind, then we have no concern at all with such a narrative as this. It is manifest that it cannot be true. There is no room for the exercise of our critical faculties. It is mixing up two distinct questions to profess to judge this book critically, and to decide at the same time upon the previous question of the abstract probability or possibility of miracles.

"The account of the apostles being supernaturally "delivered, brought forth from prison, and commanded "to speak boldly in the temple is suspicious (v.). The "liberated are imprisoned again, so that the miracle is "so far frustrated" (*ibid.*).

Now this is critically *not true*. There is no evidence of the Apostles being again imprisoned. On the contrary, they were brought before the council, examined, and beaten, whereupon "they departed from the presence of the

council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name," and the consequence was that "daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." The imprisonment of Peter in the 12th chapter refers to a totally distinct event which happened long after. Moreover, had the statement above been *true*, are we in a position to say that the miracle would have been "so far frustrated"? To say so is to carry our critical propensity into a region where it has no right to enter. *Supposing* it to have been wrought as a fact, it would doubtless have fulfilled its purpose, whether or not we could discover that purpose, even though, as far as we could judge, it *was* humanly speaking, frustrated. To determine the antecedent moral propriety of the miracle while investigating its historic evidence is unfair. The operations must be performed singly, and in order of time the second must come first. As already observed, in point of fact there is no evidence in the narrative of that which is alleged as the reason for the verdict passed upon the antecedent moral fitness of the miracle, consequently this verdict, *so far*, breaks down.

"The whole" of Gamaliel's speech, it is said, may be "fictitious" (p. 245). And it "is improbable" that so soon after the death of Jesus "the Pharisees should have "become the protectors of the early Christians," "And it "is equally so that the Sadducees had taken their place as "the persecutors of" them. "It is even said that the "high priest Annas was at the head of the Sadducean "party (v. 17), which we know to be incorrect, both "from his appearance when Christ was accused before "him, and from Josephus. Neither Annas nor Caiaphas "was a Sadducee." The late Professor Blunt, of Cambridge, used to specify the prominence of the Sadducees in the early portion of the Acts as an undesigned coincidence, tending to show that the proclamation of the fact of the resurrection was the hidden cause which had ex-

asperated that party against the disciples of Him whose principal adversaries had before been the Pharisees. This is an instance of the different effects produced upon different minds in contemplation of one and the same subject; may we not say also, of the way in which the effect varies according as the contemplation is favourable or unfavourable? This at least is clear, that in the former case the impression was produced by bare recognition of the facts, whereas in the latter it would seem that the facts have been a little wrested, for it is certain that what Josephus *does* say, goes to show that if Annas was not, his family at least were of the Sadducean party. See Alford's note. Neither is it very clear what the "appearance" of Annas, "when Christ was accused before him," has to do with the evidence of his being *not* a Sadducee. We are at a loss, therefore, to perceive the ground there is for saying that "the writer had an object "in making Annas a Sadducee, and Gamaliel the Pharisee "a friend of the persecuted." It is to be observed, moreover, that the writer does not say, even if his words naturally imply, that Annas *himself* was a Sadducee, still less that he was "at the head of the Sadducean party." His words are, "Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, which is the sect of the Sadducees." Also it is not disputed that Gamaliel was a Pharisee. The reader, therefore, must draw his own conclusion as to whose "object" is most conspicuous, that of the writer of the Acts or his critic.

"The general persecution arising upon the death of "Stephen can hardly have driven away *all* the Christians "from Jerusalem, except the apostles, as stated in viii. 1. "A storm bursting upon the disciples would fall first "and most severely upon their leaders. Schleiermacher is "therefore correct in supposing that the phrase 'except "the apostles,' is unhistorical, being inserted for the "sake of the history of Philip" (p. 246).

One does not see how the history of Philip, if *historical*, as it is admitted to be (*ibid.*), stands in need of any such insertion to make it credible; nor how it would be thereby made so were it otherwise. Even if the Apostles had fled likewise, Philip's visit to Samaria would have been none the less likely. The objection here appears to arise from opposite quarters at the same time. First, *all* the Christians, except the Apostles, cannot have been driven away; and, secondly, the Apostles must surely have been driven away too, that is, more must have been driven away than the *all* who were driven away. Must we not admit that such criticism is arbitrary rather than safe?

The view which represents the narrative of Peter and John being sent to Samaria to impart the Holy Ghost, as based upon "the belief that none but an apostle had "this magic power," is so contrary to the whole drift and tenor, not only of the Acts of the Apostles, but of the New Testament itself, that it is needless to remark upon it. We may bear in mind, however, that St. Paul longed to visit Rome for a similar purpose, Rom. i. 11.

"As to the visions and marvels introductory to the "baptism of Cornelius, they are numerous enough to "awaken suspicion. . . . All that can be upheld as histo-"rical is, that Peter baptized a proselyte of the name of "Cornelius, at this early period; not that he baptized a "Gentile centurion before the council held at Jerusalem. "The simple fact is dressed out with the miraculous "element to mark its importance in connexion with "Peter's person" (p. 250).

It is very difficult to decide how much of assumption there is here, but at first sight there appears to be a good deal. It is doubtless difficult to disprove the assertions, because they are based upon a *theory* that is not amenable to the test of proof, but it is to be observed also that it is only possible to *prove* them by flying in the

face of such evidence, written documentary evidence, as actually does exist. There is no written documentary evidence in support of them, that is certain. The long considered, and patiently decided verdict of a large, a thoughtful, and an unbiassed public, is the only standard to which we can appeal, and to that our appeal is made with the deepest and most unhesitating confidence. It is surely not critical to start upon the investigation of a book like the Acts with the foregone conclusion that its facts are imaginary, and its teaching is erroneous, and on *that* ground to reject it. This is the very thesis which has first to be established upon irrefragable proof, which at present has most certainly not been adduced. Theory is advanced which we are to accept for evidence. It is precisely *this*, however, that on *critical* grounds we are forbidden to do.

"The basis of the story" of Peter's release from prison "is some unexpected deliverance of the apostle, "which was afterwards set forth in a mythic dress. Paul's "encounter with Elymas the sorcerer, in Paphos, is simi- "lar to Peter's with Simon Magus. The punishment "inflicted upon him resembles Paul's own blindness at "the time of conversion. It is, therefore, probable that "the occurrence is fictitious. The cure of a lame man at "Lystra is so similar to a cure performed by Peter, that it "seems modelled after it. The very language employed "by the writer, in both cases, is alike. The effect of the "miracle on the people of the place, the worship offered, "the sacrifices almost performed to Paul and Barnabas, "appear to be as unhistorical as the miracle itself" (p. 251).

All history becomes useless and unprofitable if it is to be dealt with thus, for then every event must be held to be incredible which resembles any other event. One would have thought that the episode with Elymas, the sorcerer, was sufficiently diverse from that of Peter with

Simon Magus, to prevent one being confounded with the other. The blindness of Paul resembles that of Elymas, just as the blindness of Milton resembles that of Homer, or as the darkness of any one blind man resembles the darkness of any other. With respect to the two lame men it is best to compare the language used in both cases.

Acts iii. 2—10.

And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ancle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking, and praising God: and they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

Acts xiv. 8—11.

And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: the same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men, &c.

The reader will probably be surprised to find that "the "very language employed by the writer in both cases," which "is alike," is comprised in the two common phrases, τις ἀνὴρ . . . . χωλὸς ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ ὑπάρχων, and ἀτενίσας, the other features are all different; one man was carried, the other was sitting; one is described as being

impotent in his feet and as having never walked, which the other is not; one man was begging, the other was not; one man was listening to Paul, the other was watching Peter and John; one man was expecting to receive something, the other had faith to be healed. Peter took the one man by the right hand and lifted him up, Paul spoke to the other with a loud voice. The words used in both cases were different, the effect is described differently, and the impression produced upon the spectators in both cases was different. Does not criticism sometimes need criticising?

"The cause of the imprisonment of Paul and Silas at "Philippi, and the particulars connected with their "deliverance, cannot be historical." [Why not?] "How "could an earthquake have shaken the fetters of all the "prisoners?" *If* the earthquake occurred as related, it may well have been the means of doing so.

"Could the jailor, seeing the prison-doors open, think "at once of committing suicide, contrary to conscious "innocence?" Why not; "supposing that the prisoners "had been fled?"

"How could Paul know, in the darkness of the inner "prison, that the captives were all present? Did none "of them think of escaping?" The first impression was probably one of terror. The prisoners were paralysed.

"Did the jailor know at once that the earthquake "occurred for the sake of Paul and Silas?" He may or may not: this nowhere appears. The narrative suggests that the effect of the earthquake on the mind of the jailor was no less mysterious than the cause of it, and doubtless if it was what is related, he would "venture" gladly "to "set the two free on his own responsibility."

"The miracle was uncalled for, because the Roman "duumvirs released Paul and Silas in the morning." This may not have been its principal object; the conversion of the jailor and his family may have been partly so.

If the earthquake actually occurred, we are not judges of its expediency or of its objects. All we are told is that certain events happened in consequence of it.

"Indeed the authorities themselves treated them ille-
"gally and brutally, since they beat and imprisoned
"them before trial, though one at least was a Roman
"citizen." How do we know this, except on the autho-
rity of that writer whose testimony is so often called in question?

"Could not the apostle have prevented such treatment
"at first, by asserting his rights?" The narrative implies that this was done in defiance of any such protest.

"Why should the jailor have been charged to keep the prisoners in close confinement?" Why should he not, as the multitude are said to have been exasperated against them?

"The jailor's conduct throughout, his sudden conver-
"sion and baptism, the entreaty of the magistrates that
"they should depart from the city in the morning, all
"heighten the story, making the deliverance not only
"more remarkable, but honourable to Paul. The miracle
"and its accompaniments are unhistorical. There is no
"need to deny the fact of the imprisonment, or the
"speedy liberation of the apostle by the authorities; the
"rest is the writer's" (p. 254). Is there nothing arbi-
trary in this professed criticism? Are not the difficulties raised somewhat imaginary in character? Are they not self-originated?

With respect to the "Nazarite offering in the temple" made by Paul, we are told "conduct *for such a purpose* is
"inconsistent with his well-known principles. If he did
"engage in the transaction, the motive and object dif-
"fered from those stated in the text. It may be that he
"was seized by the Jews in the temple, to which he had
"gone for some other purpose than the one stated. As
"to his being allowed by the Roman commander to speak

" to the multitude from the stairs of the castle, the cre-
" dibility of the thing is doubtful; and the character
" of the discourse strengthens the doubt, because the
" writer of the Acts appears in it as well as Paul" (p. 255).

This is the objection insisted upon with so much emphasis by Baur, "Paulus der Apostel," 196 ff. The interpretation of Paul's conduct depends upon the light in which we view it. Why should we assume that the writer of the Acts meant to hold it up for approbation? He neither approves nor censures it. Shall we take it for granted that he means us to approve it? Suppose Paul acted thus and acted *wrong*. What are we to infer? That it was impossible for him to act wrong? What if the very principles laid down in 1 Cor. ix for once misled him? Is that an absolutely impossible hypothesis? If, as Baur says, he would have been by this act guilty of the same ὑπόκρισις as that which he blamed in Peter, is it impossible that he may have been? Are we to assume that Paul could not be guilty of inconsistency, in order that we may prove the writer of the Acts untrue? May not his judgment have erred here as it seems to have done afterwards, and as the writer hints that it did (Acts xxvi. 32), in appealing to Cæsar? This is on the assumption that a real inconsistency exists; others, on purely critical grounds, may perhaps still be allowed to think that the inconsistency is more imaginary than real; and that the case in point was wholly covered by the avowed principles of St. Paul.

It is instructive to observe that M. Renan believes St. Paul acted as the Acts affirm that he did (p. 520). "Paul se submit à tout cela."

At least it is obvious that the doubts expressed above are not the more valid because they admit of no direct answer. We may reasonably think that a large majority of unprejudiced persons will yet believe that the writer of the Acts is after all as trustworthy as some of those

who would sit in judgment upon him, and who seem to imagine that they can construct a more veracious narrative of the doings of St. Paul than he has left us. But, as we have said, the ultimate verdict does not rest with this critic nor with that, but with the large body of devout, intelligent, and fair-judging students, who in the present and in *future* generations shall patiently consider and shall calmly weigh the original narrative of the Acts and the unsparing criticisms that have been passed upon it, the simplicity of the sacred document and the flimsy tissue of vague and varying conjecture which we are asked to establish in its place.

In the speech before the Sanhedrim, "the conduct "attributed to the apostle, by which he availed himself "of a device to produce division in the assembly and "thereby defeat his enemies, is not what his known "character would lead us to expect. *In the circumstances* "it borders on hypocrisy to call himself a Pharisee" (p. 256) [9].

Here, again, we cannot but think that there is room for the opposite opinion, and that many persons would prefer it. If this is the case, it cannot be demanded by the principles of true criticism to adopt a theory which at the best is grounded upon a mere opinion very doubtfully to be preferred. To us the stratagem in point appears a worthy stroke of genuine Pauline tact. (Cf. also 2 Cor. xii. 16).

We have now gone carefully through every important doubt or aspersion thrown by Dr. Davidson on the Acts

[9] M. Renan, on the contrary, appears to accept it as historical: "Le stratagème de Paul réussit à merveille," p. 530; but he adds in a note, "Nous croyons bien qu'il y a dans ce récit des *Actes* quelque arrangement artificiel." It not unfrequently happens that the objections of different objectors neutralise each other, and their theories are mutually destructive. The fact that what is denied by one is conceded by another goes to show, in many cases, the needlessness of the objection.

of the Apostles. The reader must judge with what result. We cannot but trust and believe that he will think much of the professed criticism recently advanced against the credibility of it altogether breaks down. Whether or not the book is credible is another question; suffice it to say, that *for the reasons now assigned* it is certainly *not* incredible. It may, perhaps, be thought inconsistent to admit that among the documents which the writer of the Acts made use of were the Epistles of St. Paul (p. 260), and yet, at the same time to ground the principal charge against him on his having gone counter to those Epistles, to make the discrepances between his narrative and them the chief cause of complaint. Moreover, we cannot but think that on Dr. Davidson's own showing (p. 269) the external evidence for the *early*[1] origin of the book is even stronger than it is for its late origin. To us it seems that, as there stated, the case for its origin in the Apostolic times is as strong as it well can be.

[1] It must be admitted that if but *one* quotation can be discovered the antiquity of the book is proved. Such a quotation the Epistle of Polycarp seems to give: indeed Davidson himself says that this Epistle "has one passage showing acquaintance with the Acts, viz. in the first chapter, where we read that God 'raised up Christ, having loosed the pains of death,' alluding to Acts ii. 24" (p. 270). But if so, what more is wanted? The same quotation in Polycarp is immediately followed by one from the First Epistle of Peter, and another from the Epistle to the Ephesians, to both of which Davidson himself refers in proof of the antiquity of those Epistles (vol. i. pp. 412. 382). Of course it is not possible to *prove* quotation in any one of these cases; but it must be allowed the evidence is very strong, the more so perhaps because in all the similarity is substantial and not verbal; and certainly the critic who appeals to it in the one place ought consistently to allow it in the other. We must bear in mind also, that if one writer manifests acquaintance with the book, it matters not how many pass it by in silence. There are, however, many other passages given both by Hefele and by Davidson, which taken all together can hardly leave much doubt on the mind of any one who is not resolved to believe that the Acts were the product of the second century. To us the evidence appears to be conclusive on the other side. Polycarp's words are, ὃν ἤγειρεν ὁ Θεός, λύσας τὰς ὠδῖνας τοῦ ᾅδου. Εἰς ὃν οὐκ ἰδόντες πιστεύετε, πιστεύοντες δὲ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε χαρᾷ ἀνεκλαλήτῳ καὶ δεδοξασμένῃ· εἰς ἣν πολλοὶ ἐπιθυμοῦσιν εἰσελθεῖν, εἰδότες, ὅτι χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων, ἀλλὰ θελήματι Θεοῦ, διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

And, certainly, when we are told (p. 275) that "No "proper link of connexion can be inferred between the "authorship of the *we*-paragraphs and the rest of the "treatise because the first person is also used in i. 1. "On the contrary, the first person *singular* in i. 1, is "rather against the identity of the two,"—the reason assigned is quite inadequate to the conclusion drawn, for, in the first place, the writer speaks of the sole responsibility of authorship, but in the others, of that experience in the events witnessed, which he shared in common with his companions. However, in all these cases it is the intelligent reader who must judge.

Let us finally notice the writer's supposed object. "These observations lead to the conclusion that the ob- "ject of the writer was conciliatory. He had two parties "in view, Jewish- and Gentile-christian, which he wished "to bring nearer to one another. In the interest of that "object he moulds the history. A Gentile-christian "himself, and regarding Paul as the great apostle, he "shows how near he comes to Peter and the other apos- "tles in conduct and sentiments, while fully equal to them "in official qualifications. They resemble one another, "and are on the most amicable terms. The parallelism "between them indicates their common interests and "labours. When at last Paul is brought to Rome, the "metropolis of the heathen world, the writer has attained "his purpose. That fact and its consequences show the "universal aspect of Christianity. Paul becomes the "apostle of the Gentiles, in the fullest sense, when the "Jews generally reject his message, in fulfilment of the "prophecies. To further Pauline Christianity by bring- "ing the two ecclesiastical parties more closely together, "was the author's leading aim. This opinion is con- "firmed by the third gospel, in which the writer was "actuated by a like purpose. At the same time many

"phenomena in the book seem to disagree with this pur-
"pose. Had it been in the writer's mind, it has been
"asked, why did he not state other things, such as the
"parallel deaths of Paul and Peter? Why has he set
"down many facts and particulars which have either no
"perceptible relation to it, or an unsuitable one? Ob-
"jections of this nature, which play an important part in
"the criticisms of men like Lekebusch, overlook the
"fact that the writer had to do with things described in
"written documents, or handed down by tradition. He
"did not invent but narrate a history. He could not,
"therefore, mould all into one consistent shape, but
"could only give a bias according to his purpose. In
"selecting, abridging, modifying, and altering his mate-
"rials, he had to maintain a measure of historical fidelity,
"else his purpose would have been defeated. History
"must not be converted into fiction; it must retain fea-
"tures of verisimilitude. The conciliatory tendency runs
"through the book in a gentle stream, not in that over-
"whelming force, which could only have arisen from
"abandoning the materials, so far as to efface almost all
"marks of authentic narrative or historical probability"
(pp. 281, 282).

Is it not strange that many of the acutest intellects of Christendom have for centuries been directed to the study and the criticism of the Acts of the Apostles, and yet no one has ever detected any evidence of this being the writer's secret object, till within the lifetime of the present generation? Is there any limit to the creative power of theory? Once originate a theory, and how readily may all facts be made to yield to it! How speedily do they serve to illustrate and confirm it! One point only we must not fail to bear in mind, that arguments based on such ideal foundations it is utterly impossible to refute; they are impervious, because impalpable; they are intangible for the very reason that they are insubstantial.

If there is a vague and general similarity between the lives of Peter and Paul, this similarity must, forsooth, have been designed (though why is it not more sharply drawn?). If there is a still more manifest unlikeness, it must be overlooked. We must ignore the fact that Peter wanes when Paul begins to rise; that after the 15th chapter Peter is mentioned no more; that Peter, who was every thing at first, is scarcely heard of again after his escape from prison; that, in fact, the parallelism is imaginary, and not real; or, if real, most unquestionably not prominent nor conspicuous. We must ignore the fact that so many motives, far more obvious and plausible than this, may be assigned for the composition of the Acts; and, above all, the extreme improbability, not to say, the absolute impossibility, of any writer at the period assumed conceiving such an idea as this, and endeavouring to express it in such a way. Would not that be contrary to all the evidence of contemporary literature, whether Christian or heathen? Can a parallel instance be produced? The very idea is that of a man who looks at the events recorded from a great distance of time, and not that of one who was himself living in the midst of the party-strife, which, it is supposed, he endeavoured to pacify. Given the assumed condition of the Church at A.D. 125, which made it desirable that such a treatise as the Acts should be written for the purpose alleged, how was any writer so to abstract himself from the influences around him as to conceive such a notion as upon the hypothesis is there presented? And, further, supposing him to have conceived it, how were his readers, still more immersed in the concrete than he was himself, to have comprehended his etherealised and abstract meaning? If they could have taken such a distant, bird's-eye view, so to say, as this implies, of their own position, or of that of their first great party-leaders, Peter and Paul, they would not have been the victims of the strong party-feeling,

from the very existence of which it is alleged that the necessity for the book arose. It was not, therefore, a possible production of the assumed condition of the Church. In other words, the tendency of the hypothesis is to confute and subvert itself. It is self-contradictory and self-destructive.

THE END.

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